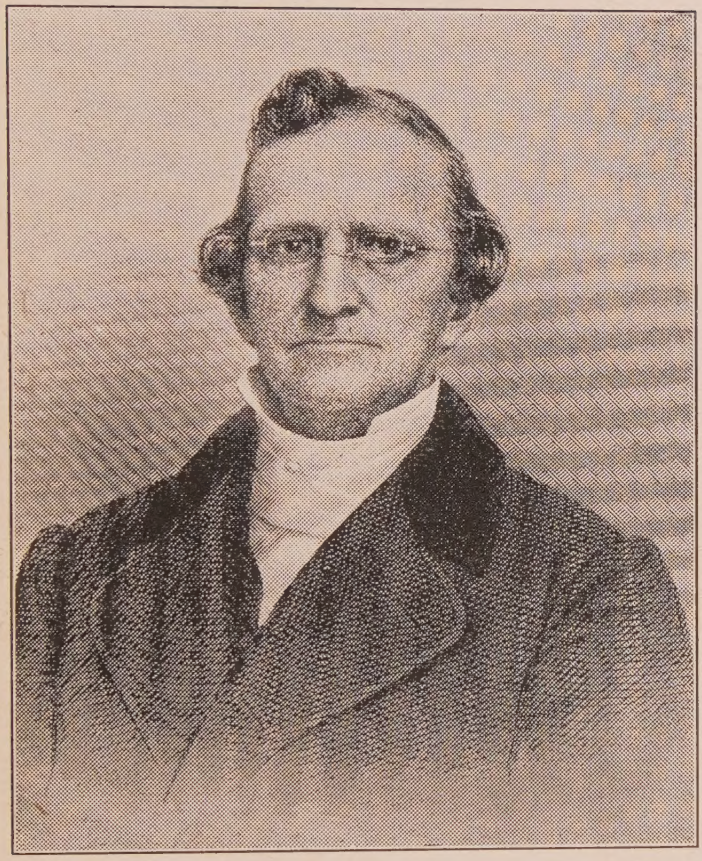
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/landmarksofrefor0000will



REV. ISAAC N. WYCKOFF, D.D.

2851
V289L
1922

LANDMARKS
of the
REFORMED FATHERS

OR

What Dr. Van Raalte's People Believed

BY
WILLIAM O. VAN EYCK

"Remove not the ancient Landmark which thy fathers have set."
Prov. 22:28

"Faith of our fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword.
O how our hearts beat high with joy,
Whene'er we hear that glorious word:
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death."

THE MASTER'S COLLEGE LIBRARY
SANTA CLARITA, CA 91321

THE REFORMED PRESS
Eerdmans-Sevensma Co.
Publishers
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Copyrighted by
Wm. O. Van Eyck
1922

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction 7
2. Removing the Under-Brush..... 17
3. The Voice of the "Mother Church" in Holland..... 39
4. As a Lily Among Thorns..... 61
5. The Thunders of Dort..... 71
6. Cor Ecclesiæ..... 88
7. The Church of God..... 101
8. The Local Church..... 112
9. What is a Reformed Church?..... 132
10. The Soul of the Church..... 142
11. The Police Rules of God's House..... 147
12. The Hackensack Insurrection..... 166
13. Dr. Milledoler on the Secession of 1822..... 209
14. Report on the Secession of 1822..... 217
15. General Synod Holds the Balance-Rod..... 230
16. Far Hence Unto the Gentiles..... 237
17. Backsight and Foresight..... 244
18. Tidings from Afar..... 250
19. What the Reformed Church Knew about Holland 257
20. Sons of Thunder..... 267
21. The Reformed Church a Rock..... 274
22. A Beacon Light in the Night of Error..... 281
23. A Photograph of the Church in 1850..... 286
24. The Reformed Church Ahead of the Hollanders in the West..... 290

I. INTRODUCTION

IN THIS work I am not attacking the several local Christian Reformed, or Seceder churches and their members, but I am attacking not a little the connection in which they stand. These churches are autonomous plants of the great Church in spite of the irregular and revolutionary character of the organization with which they were affiliated since the secession of 1857. This connection is, however, not the essential part of these churches, and, despite their government and their irregular origin, they must still be judged as other churches are. But whatever the rather carefully trained people of the Secession Church of the Netherlands, who immigrated to America since 1880, have made of the Secession Church in our midst, and however much the successors of the Seceders of 1857 have been obliged to repudiate by their acts that Secession of 1857, it is necessary for us to insist that the writers who are still maintaining the justifiableness of that secession, while surrendering its main grounds, be called to account for their failure to perceive and acknowledge honestly that the true trend leads more and more toward vindicating Dr. Van Raalte and the Reformed Dutch Church as against that Secession.

The Seceder writings, beginning with the *Brochure* of 1869, and ending with Dr. Beets' *Zestig Jaren van Strijd en Zegen* (1918), are of such a nature that they are of no value whatever as evidence to show the validity of the Secession of 1857, for they contain simply the statements and claims of those Seceders—claims unsubstantiated by correct Reformed doctrine and practice. The truth, therefore, of those writings is involved with that of the Secession itself, and both are consequently in issue. In a sense, what Reformed

writers like Revs. Zwemer and De Bey, and Rev. N. H. Dosker have written against that Secession may also be considered too closely identified with the schism, and I have therefore not used their evidence and claims, except where they appeal to correct Reformed Standards and authorities. Again, as positive evidence with which to prove their case, the Seceder *Brochure* (1869), the *Zamenspraak* (1874), Hemke's *Rechtsbestaan* (1894), and Beets' *Zestig Jaren* are decidedly worthless; and more than that, they contain very damaging admissions against their cause, as will be shown at the proper time. These writers practically claim that the Secession of 1857 and the assertions in its favor by the men of that day, prove its correctness. No one, however, denies that that schism actually took place, and that certain allegations were made to sustain it. These, however, are not the evidence; in fact, they prove nothing except that the schism took place. The real issue is now, and always was, whether the reasons assigned for that secession were tenable and valid as correct Reformed doctrine and practice; and this puts in issue, not exactly what is now in all details Reformed doctrine and practice, but (1), what was Reformed doctrine and practice in and before 1857, and (2), whether the Reformed Dutch Church deviated fundamentally therefrom at that time. In order, however, to prove or disprove these two, we must appeal to Reformed Standards of the Reformation times, and to the doctrines and practice as exemplified in the Reformed Churches in Scotland and France, and in the Netherlands; and with the latter we must compare the Reformed Dutch Church in America, and especially, and particularly, and thoroughly, the Seceders of 1857 in Michigan. The Secession of 1857 and the claims advanced in favor of it, are not the evidence or touchstone by which to judge that movement; for so long as both are themselves the matter in issue, they must themselves be judged by Reformed doctrine and practice. Moreover, we must judge that Secession by what was admittedly Reformed

at that time, and not judge Reformed doctrine and polity by what the few among the seceders in old Holland, and the few seceders of 1857, claimed was Reformed. The latter, however erroneous, seems to be the favorite method of the Seceder writers mentioned.

I have consulted all the Seceder publications, and have made a joint abstract of their claims and evidence, and I was surprised indeed to find that they all ignored what the Reformed authorities say directly under the head of Secession. These Seceders either take for granted that their readers fully understand the nature of the Church and the proper application of Church Rules, or they purposely fail to explain in their books these two important matters. But upon a closer view of the subject, it is no wonder that western Seceders always appeal to the few exceptions among the Seceders in the Netherlands and to the statement of the Seceders of 1857, instead of having recourse to Reformed authorities; for when I began to test the whole matter of the Secession of 1857 and its apologists, by writers like Calvin and Brakel, I found nowhere in all ecclesiastical history such a strong arraignment of the Secession of 1857 as that furnished by the seceding Church at Graafschap, Mich., itself, in 1857. Instead of making out a case against the Reformed Church, Graafschap wrote the death warrant of its own cause by returning to the wildness of the Dutch Secession instead of to Dort. It is high time that the task of writing the ecclesiastical history of the western Hollanders be taken from the hands of clergymen, so long as they insist on applying the exceptional and one-sided statements of extremists, instead of those of recognized Reformed authorities, to the Reformed Church of the East, and so long as they continue to darken counsel with technical and scholastic terms instead of going back to actual history and first principles.

These Seceder writers have done worse; they failed to investigate properly the history of the Reformed Dutch Church; they ignored almost entirely the rec-

ords of the Colonial Churches before 1857, and they have actually falsified the history of 1847-57; and this to such an extent that for years, in common with many others, and with all Seceders, I took for granted that the Seceder claims of 1857 against hymns, etc., in the Reformed Church, really constituted a case of deviation from Reformed doctrine, and a breach of the Rules of Dort. But an appeal to the Reformed Standards, and to the history of the Churches of the era of Dort, revealed the fact that the Seceders of 1857 *knew neither what was Reformed nor what is meant by the words "Rules of Dort."* I also acquired a lurking suspicion that many of the "Colonists" who remained faithful to the Reformed Church in 1857, did not know too much about real Reformed doctrine and government. And it was for these reasons that I took pains to consult the great Reformed writers, so as to ascertain what Reformed doctrine really was, and what the limits and scope of Church Rules actually were. A knowledge of the nature of the Church, of the very limited application of Church Rules, and of the history of the Reformed Churches in Europe and in New York and New Jersey, are first requisites for those who presume to judge the ecclesiastical affairs of the "Colony," and it will therefore readily be seen why I have devoted so much space to apparently introductory matters such as the Reformed Dutch Church, the Synod of Dort, and Church Rules. Without a rather accurate knowledge of first principles like these, it is impossible to understand the whole matter at issue.

Strange as it may seem, during my investigations, I very soon perceived that the real conservative branch of the Reformed Churches in the world was the Reformed Church in the East, and not the western branch, nor the western Seceder Church, for both of the latter were for years too much under the influence of the terrible reaction which had shaken the Netherlands some years before, to be able to see clearly and conservatively. The Seceders in the Neth-

erlands keep shouting to us from across the Atlantic: "Keep up the autonomy of the local churches." The organ of our western Seceders, *De Wachter,* in its issue of Jan. 25, 1922, declared that "there are true Christians among the Free Masons." Both these facts the Reformed Dutch Church knew so well, fifty years ago, that she deliberately refused to impair the autonomy of her local churches by taking the matter of discipline, even in the case of Free Masonry, away from the local churches, because it involved an infraction of the strict rules of discipline disclosed in the New Testament. On the other hand, so far from being conservative and Reformed, the Secession Church of the West was from the start so radical and reactionary, that in doctrine she was for years actually in the Antinomian camp, and in her polity she actually went back to Rome and the State Church of Holland. Those Seceders of 1857 claimed that they were reconstituting "The True Reformed Church," de Ware Gereformeerde Kerk. To make that claim good, however, they have to appeal successfully to Reformed doctrine and practice; but, so far from having done this, they are today actually insisting upon continued separation from the Reformed Church, while recognizing that Reformed Dutch Church as a true Reformed Church of Christ, and while undermining and surrendering their own foundations laid in 1857—a strange and incongruous situation indeed.

I make no apology for writing on a subject heretofore considered the special gunning-grounds or game-preserve of clergymen. The subject was not one of choice, but it was forced upon me by the slip-shod and incorrect statements of incompetent writers, who with their claims of church reformation since 1857, have endeavored to set up rather impure and incomplete standards of doctrine and polity, have laid a false glamor over the schism of 1857, and have actually attempted to brand the fathers of 1849-50 as heretics and deceivers. It is regrettable that some one not hampered too much by environment, or not so nar-

rowed by training and association as most of the black-cloth writers are, has not long ago, applied, with a merciless logic, the search-light of Reformed doctrine and polity to that schism of 1857. Historical research is open to all, and it is hoped that abler hands than mine will take up this task thoroughly and exhaustively.

Again, I say that I am not warring with the Christian Reformed people, their local churches, their religious work, their many excellent publications; and especially not with their great interest in the old religious literature of Holland. But these are not in issue. The only question is whether the seccession of 1857, and the resulting separation of these people from the Reformed Church, is right. That is the problem before us. In my attempt to discuss that problem, the separate existence of the western Seceders, and the Seceder writers defending that separation, will get what they have had "coming to them" for a long time, for the whole secession and the claims of its defenders are based, not on correct Reformed doctrine and practice, but on the extreme positions and assertions of a few of the leaders of the Secession in the Netherlands after 1834. Almost all of the arguments advanced by the Seceder writers are so unfair, and some of those of Dr. Beets are so puerile, that I have considered them rather thoroughly in another series of papers, in which the principles enunciated in the present series will be applied directly to the schism of 1857 and the later ecclesiastical affairs of the "Colony."

I have endeavored to avoid the use of technical terms and theological nomenclature, and to reduce the whole matter of those secessions to terms of common history, so that people might understand the question; and, the reader will also notice that throughout these papers I base every important statement on recognized authorities, whether synods or writers, so that it is these authorities (not myself) that are actually speaking. And, for that reason such criticism as e. g., the one Dr. Beets made on Dr. Dosker's application of

the word "demoralization" to the anti-masonry agitation, as a "pracht-uitdrukking" (a de luxe expression), "applied to efforts for church reformation," count for nothing, for it is not what the Seceders of 1857 *intended* to do, but what they actually *did,* that forms the question at issue. Intent to reform is not always the same as reform, and calling secession reformation does not in itself prove it to be anything but deformation. Facts and evidence are needed to prove reformation, for reformation by rhetoric merely is placing strange fire on the altars of the Lord.

Wrapping oneself in an imaginary cloak of sanctity, with the claim that the Secession of 1857 was the union of the select—the elect—in the Colony, and that criticism thereof is the equivalent of "evil-speaking," evidently proves nothing. Dr. Beets, on p. 102 of his Zestig Jaren, after calling that secession a matter of sacred duty, etc., and "Honi soit qui mal y pense,"—Evil be to him who evil thinks,—further says, "Cruel and arbitrary is he who thinks otherwise." But we shall see who were the first to think evil in 1852, 1853, 1856 and 1857, of the Reformed Church, and particularly of Dr. Van Raalte, without just cause, and we shall see what recognized Reformed doctrine and practice say about such evil-thinking.

Dr. Steffens once said that he refused to speak further of the work of Rev. Van Den Bosch, "lest he should inflict deep wounds"; but it is the duty of those who attempt to write history to tell the truth, regardless of the deep wounds they may inflict. And let none of us flatter himself with the idea that those western Hollanders, and particularly the Seceders of 1857, were the perfection of holiness and piety, or that they alone knew what was Reformed. A glance within the veil which has for years obscured the religious life of our western people, reveals the fact that the Secession of 1857 was largely the embodiment of evil-thinking, which appealed to the prejudices of very common people. The whole history of that Secession shows that it is not free from the continuation of appeals to

the same feelings. During the eighties, Rev. Hemkes, at the time when there was a great movement for hymns in his Church, admitted this, when he said, "our people are not yet ripe for it,"—an admission that people can and may be ripe for hymns, as the Reformed Church was years ago, and that therefore secession on that account was simply an appeal to unripe people as against those who were ripe. The history of the Secession Church contains similar surrenders.

Historians do not inflict deep wounds without provocation given by actors who build on erroneous foundations, and if what is said in this volume should perchance, inflict wounds, it is not improper to give notice in advance that in what follows in another volume, the work of the leaders of that secession will not be handled so gently, but that some consideration by the Seceders of their ecclesiastical emergency remedies and hospitals will not be superfluous.

The time to rip the veneer off our Colonial Church history is here, and though it may involve the infliction of many wounds, it must be done, in order to heal the greater and more dangerous wound inflicted in 1857. There is no force in soft words which fail to hit the mark. It is time to call things by their right names.

While in my investigations I occasionally experienced a strange unwillingness to assist me with documents and files, my thanks are due to the Rev. Dr. Blekkink of the Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Mich., for the unlimited use of the excellent Seminary Library; to Dr. Gerhard De Jonge, of Zeeland, Mich., for access to the minutes and files of the Classis of Holland; to Dr. Henry Lockwood, of East Millstone, N. J., for a copy of the report and sermon of Dr. Milledoler on the Secession of 1822; and, to Prof. John B. Nykerk of Hope College for the loan of several important works bearing on the Secessions in

the Netherlands and in America. Dr. Nykerk's opinion about the English used by the writer, if expressed, would, no doubt, be unprintable, but without his encouragement and expert advice on certain features of importance in this work, these papers would probably not have seen the light.

WM. O. VAN EYCK.

Holland, Mich., Feb. 22, 1922.

II. REMOVING THE UNDER-BRUSH

THE papers in this volume are merely an introduction, or rather, an introduction to an introduction. The writer, in his quest for reliable information on the general history of the Hollanders who settled in America since 1846, found the ecclesiastical element so fundamental, that no one should be permitted to write on that history without a thorough knowledge of the church history involved. But, in order to understand that church history, a knowledge of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, of the secession from that church in 1834, of the founding of the Reformed Church in America, and of the doctrines, worship, and discipline of these several churches, is quite indispensable. The general history of the Hollanders in America was therefore the main object of inquiry, with their church history as introductory, while the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and in the East, with their doctrines, etc., was introductory to the whole.

The writer found the confusion and errors in the history of those western Hollanders, as lately written, so great, that the whole narrative is beginning to bear a false character. The battles fought among them on doctrinal points and Church Rules, resulting in the secessions of 1857 and later, showed such a radical, revolutionary departure from the Fathers of the Eighty Years War and of Dort, that it was found necessary to write up in general terms the proper setting of the doctrine of Predestination, the nature of the Church, universal, denominational and local, the position of the Synod of Dort, and especially the nature, limits and scope of Church Orders or Rules.

Without a correct restatement of the cardinal doctrines of the Reformed Church as shown from Reformation times to the present, shorn of the questionable varnish laid thereon by some of the seceders in Holland and America, in the East and in the West, the arguments of western writers, pro and con, do not appeal to the average reader, because they are largely unintelligible. A true statement of the proper place of doctrines like Predestination and of Church Rules as maintained in Reformed Churches from the Synod of Wesel to Dort, and in the history of the churches of Dort, and as explained by scholars like Voetius, De Moor, Turretin, Van Prinsterer, and Kuyper, alone can reveal the fact that the secession of 1857, in Michigan, was largely based on error, caused by ignorance of what is really "Reformed," as Dr. Van Raalte also, in 1857, actually said it was.

Any writer who takes, e. g., the six reasons for secession assigned by the Church at Graafschap in 1857, as constituting, under Reformed doctrine and practice, a sufficient cause for secession, as well as the writer who continues to defend those "six reasons" at this late day, is certainly not at all qualified to write truthful history. When people secede from a Reformed Church on account of hymns, Sunday Schools, criticism of the Dutch Secession of 1834, recognition of other denominations, etc., as happened in 1857, it is evident that a great mistake was made somewhere and sometime at the base of that secession.

That great mistake by the Seceders was based on several errors stated as follows: 1. The notion that Predestination must be emphasized, regardless of the dangers of Antinomianism lurking there, while the observance of discretion and moderation at all times in the discussion of that subject was the rule in Reformed Churches since the Reformation. Many seceders both in Holland and America forgot this rule.

2. The notion that the Synod of Dort stereotyped Church Rules for all time, and that,—in spite of Dort's

own postulate (Rule 86), that these Rules "may" and "ought to be changed,"—variations and changes were *ipso facto* errors. This was in 1857 one of the greatest mistakes the Seceders made.

3. That the "Holland Colonists" of 1847, or the majority of them, or even a small minority of them, held such seceder ideas, and that, consequently, Van Raalte and the other leaders misrepresented the "colonists" in the matter of the union with the Reformed Church in 1850. The truth, however, is that almost without exception Van Raalte and his people had the right conception of the equilibrium and co-ordination of doctrines, and of the limited scope of Church Rules, as maintained for years in the Church of Holland, as well as in New York and New Jersey. The claims, therefore, that the few who stood for the inviolability of the Rules of 1619 and the over-emphasizing of the doctrine of election, in the Colony before 1857, represented the sentiment of the "Colony" is simon-pure imagination; and the claim that Van Raalte and others misled their people is an invention of later days, as is also shown by the fact that very few in the "Colony" before 1882 paid the least attention to the claims of the seceder leaders.

4. The idea that the old Church in Holland, during the times of Brakel and Lodenstein, was the acme of perfection, and that what Brakel and others said against secession applied only in case of a pure church like the Netherlands Reformed Church of their days. The historical facts, however, are that Brakel wrote his *Reasonable Religion* for the people of Holland, and while he says, Vol. 1, p. 596, that "the Reformed Church is the only true Church," he plainly applied this to Holland, as against the other denominations and sects there, for on p. 603 he recognizes true churches in other nations, etc., when he says, "The Lord has in other States pastors, families, and individuals who serve him faithfully." Brakel's criticisms are therefore mainly directed against his own Church;

but in spite of these strictures, he was absolutely opposed to seceding from her. Even Lodenstein, in about 1660, said it would sometime come to a secession in his Church on account of doctrinal errors, but Lodenstein was unalterably opposed to seceding from the Reformed Church of his day. However, the complaints of these and other divines of that day, like Teelink and Voetius, who held several meetings in which they discussed the necessity of reforming their Church, show that the Dutch Church of Holland in those days was not so pure and undefiled. And there is not much question that, if a careful inquiry were made into the subject, the Reformed Church of Holland, in 1650-1750, would be found to have been not as well ordered, nor as faithful to the old doctrines, as was the Reformed Church in America in 1857. But of these things the Seceders of 1857 knew little or nothing. In morality and decency the old Church in Holland, including leaders like Prince Maurice, was far below the American Reformed Church of 1850.

5. The notion that the secession in America in 1857 and later was like the secession of 1834 in Holland. The truth is that during that secession of 1834 and later, not only was the doctrine of election ignored in the State Church, but some of the leaders denied and fought all the doctrines of grace. They even forced their rationalism and liberalism on the orthodox believers in their midst. They excommunicated the leaders of reform; and although the element of State control was responsible for this in the first instance, the work of Van Raalte, Van Velzen, Brummelkamp, and Scholte is not therefore open to question, and the less so, because these leaders were cast out. The errors and sins in connection with that secession were the terrible contentions about the relative importance of certain doctrines, the sacredness or insignificance of Church Rules, and other questions, which later were imported more or less into America. The Dutch secession suffered for years from the consequences of

ignorance of what was Reformed, and, no doubt, she swung too far the other way as a result of the natural reaction against the State Church. In the secession of 1857 in America, however, there was an absolute lack of necessity for secession as compared with the movement in Holland, and in 1857 the weak features of the Dutch secession were copied, while the good points were entirely lacking.

6. The notion that the Reformed Church in the East was like the State Church in Holland, and even worse, and that the Secession of 1857 was therefore a sacred duty. This was the fundamental error of the men of 1857, based on a combination of the other errors mentioned; and here we have the root of the difficulty, which is, therefore, the subject of investigation in these and succeeding papers.

It may be conceded that a few of the leaders of 1857 believed that they represented orthodoxy, and that Van Raalte had misled them in 1849-50 in joining the Eastern Reformed Church; but that they were correct in their belief must be strenuously denied. We of today are in better position to consult the great Reformed authorities, while the men of '57 had but little knowledge of such matters. During the Sixties, men like Revs. Van der Werp and F. Hulst came from the extreme wing of the Dutch secession, and made the seceders in Michigan even worse than they had been before. Even then the seceders were few in number, and remained so until after 1881, when a great immigration from Holland was landed in their camp by the Free Masonry agitation. But these later accessions did not represent the "colonists" of 1850; and the fact remains that in 1850 the overwhelming majority in the "colony" were decidedly opposed to the extreme secession-spirit of old Holland, and that Van Raalte therefore truly represented, and continued to represent, the colonial spirit of 1849-50.

Later on Seceders like Van der Werp, F. Hulst, Haan, R. T. Kuiper, and Hemkes wrote books or pamphlets

on the subject, but not one of their books is based on the records of 1846-50, nor on the history of the Reformed Church of Holland or of America. And to make matters worse, as late as 1918, one Rev. Beets wrote a history of the secession here, based almost exclusively on the writers just mentioned. Neither Beets nor the others consulted the records of the Colonial Churches, nor of the Classis of Holland. In absolute violation of contemporaneous records, these writers gathered a story from the utterances of a few of the extreme seceders of 1857, and tried to pass this off as representing the sentiments of the people of 1846-50. It would have been preferable to have cast a veil over the whole secession of 1857, and over the gross errors of its defenders; but when the extremely prejudiced actors in that secession rushed into print years later in defense of their errors, and when later arrivals like Hulst, Van der Werp, Haan, Kuiper, and Hemkes, none of whom was one of the "settlers," presumed to stand as the spokesman of years gone by, and tried to substitute later events in the place of those of 1846-50, and when Rev. Beets, like one born out of due time, pieces these misrepresentations into what purports to be a complete history, it is certainly time to call a halt, and to re-establish Van Raalte and the men of 1850 in their rightful historical place. We can forgive the seceders of 1857 their great blunder, in the belief that their intentions were good; but to forget their errors, and to fail to undo the bad results thereof, cannot be done without sacrificing the truth of history, and condoning the mistakes of those who certainly were not far from being iconoclasts and innovators.

The seceders of the West plead continually to be left alone, and this is not unnatural so long as writers, with Calvin, Brakel, De Moor, Witsius, the proceedings of the Synod of Dort, and the New Testament open before them, are, with the real facts of 1834-57 in view, obliged to sentence that secession of 1857 as absolutely unwarranted and unjustifiable. It is remarkable that no man can write in favor of that secession without attacking

and condemning all the Reformed Churches in the world, and without twisting Reformed doctrine and history three hundred years old; and it is likewise remarkable that no one faithful to the records can write about that secession without meting out a condemnatory sentence of "unnecessary and wrong" against it. If the foundation of that secession proves so weak before the assaults of real Reformed doctrine and practice that it cannot stand without a perversion of history, the fault is not that of the Reformed Church, but of the foundation-layers themselves. No man can claim he is reforming the church, when he acts like a bull in a china-shop, or like a blacksmith repairing a watch with a sledgehammer, of which the work of the men of '57, especially at Noordeloos, certainly furnishes a reminder. A man may have a strong faith, but when he thinks he alone has such a faith, he is usually mistaken. If a writer who consults the records of Reformed Churches in Holland and America, and consults the minutes of the Classis of Holland, and of the local churches before 1857, as against the writings of Haan, Hemkes, and the other special pleaders for secession, can pass only a judgment of disapproval on the work of the early seceders, the fault is not his, but that of the seceders themselves. If that secession must necessarily compromise the reputation of Van Raalte, Van der Meulen and their people, in order to whitewash Haan, Van den Bosch, and Krabshuis, and to make out a case for the seceders of their days, the question is solved—solved by these three seceder leaders themselves, for they all proved failures, and two of them even became repudiators of their own work of secession. If a return, from the mass of legends and stories that arose since 1850, to the historical basis of that time involves the loss of the very foundation of secession in the West, and if the truth of history before and after 1857 is such that it could not then, cannot now, and cannot for all time to come, "leave the seceders alone," there certainly was a great mistake somewhere.

The truth will be vindicated in due time. That Van

Raalte and the Classis of Holland, and the Reformed Church were on strictly Reformed ground in 1857 is proved by what is and was Reformed for centuries; but the same standard shows that the seceders, no matter what their intentions, were decidedly off the Reformed reservation. They seceded in 1857 on account of the alleged falseness of the Reformed Church, and if they could have proved this charge, their action would have been right. But under Reformed doctrine and practice, as will appear later, the main allegations of the Seceders of 1857 against the Reformed Church, even if true, cannot be admitted as instances of fundamental corruption or falseness, nor can they be conceded to be even as much as weaknesses in that Church. The weakness and falseness were with the Seceders rather than with the Reformed Church. However, in passing judgment upon the Secession of 1857, we are faced with the alternative of either (1) crediting those Seceders with the motive of seceding on account of important causes like fundamental error or falseness, or (2), of condemning them for seceding on account of mere weaknesses, which they themselves admit never justify secession. To concede, as the present Seceder Church seems to do, that the men of 1857 seceded under the pluriformity scheme, and desired a better Church only, without repudiating the Reformed Church as corrupt and false, would indeed be classing them as rebels against the very doctrines and practice of the Fathers of Dort to which they appealed so strongly. While, in either case, the men of 1857 were completely in error, it is only by maintaining that they thought they were seceding from a corrupt and false church, that we can in any way respect the motive which impelled them. Graafschap spoke of the "fraternal adieu and be by themselves again," based on their own invention of the so-called "condition" in the union of 1850, but their other acts of those and later days, under the tutelage of Krabshuis, with his slogan "There is no truth left in the Church," and of Rev. Van den Bosch's crusade there and elsewhere against

"terrible heresies" in the Reformed Church, showed that in 1857 they did not bid a fraternal adieu, but thought they seceded from a false and corrupt church, and that therefore they established the True Reformed Church (De Ware Gereformeerde Kerk), as against the false Reformed Church. The history of those seceded Churches from 1857 onward reveals a persistent and contemptuous attitude of absolute rejection of the Reformed Church consistent with no other theory, and in 1866 the Seceders did not hesitate to formally declare the Reformed Church a false Church. In 1857 men seceded not *under* the pluriformity scheme, but because they rejected totally the idea of a pluriformity of true churches, and hence they started "de Ware Kerk." And until about 1880 they maintained stoutly this claim; but at about that time there was a slight shift. They began to speak of the right to leave a church to start a better one. Prof. Hemkes said so in 1881, but so great was the confusion in his mind that he added to his statement the usual "leave the Church in order to remain in the Church," showing that the old claim was not yet extinct in his mind. Later on, the Seceders shifted still farther, and "pluriformity of churches" became their slogan, under which they claimed their right of existence, while recognizing the Reformed Church as a part of the Universal Church. Their old argument of falseness and corruptions as reasons of secession would have been correct, if provable, and under it secession would then have been Reformed, and consistent with duty. But they discovered in course of time that the Reformed Church was not a false Church in 1857 or afterwards, and that the real reason of their secession should not have been falseness, but should have been the pluriformity of churches. By their shift from falseness to this pluriformity—to establish a better church—they repudiated and destroyed their original reason of secession; for the argument that these Seceders of 1857 were justified in starting an opposition church, with the same Confession, Catechism, Canons, and

THE MASTER'S COLLEGE LIBRARY
SANTA CLARITA, CA 91321

Rules, and in beginning a work that has engendered the very bitterest feelings the human breast is capable of harboring, and involving the right of every body else to start an opposition church,—whatever it may be, is not in accordance with the law of Christ. If falseness or fundamental corruption, alleged in 1857-80, have by their own acts and statements been admitted as untenable by the Seceders, their whole case is fairly out of court; for their other and later defense, if seriously believed in, would give occasion for starting half a dozen secessions in their own ranks at once. The two positions are inconsistent and contradictory, and they mutually exclude one another; and the latter—the right to set up a better church under the conditions obtaining among us in the West involves the disintegration of all Christian unity as exhibited in denominational life. The disastrous effects of blending or confusing the two claims is, consequently, very prominent in works like Rev. Beets' history, where that writer uses partly these two inconsistent arguments, although he practically rejects the alleged falseness, and intimates, in a foot-note, at least, that he bases the secession on the other policy—the pluriformity of Churches. The claim of falseness of the Reformed Church in 1857, if established, would, of course, have justified the secession; but the pluriformity scheme, bad enough as applied between Methodists, or Baptists, and Reformed, is, when applied to the then and now existing situation in and between the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches, nothing less than an invention of doctrinaire secessionism. Pluriformity may apply where it is unavoidable, but in the religious life of the western Hollanders, not such an abominable program of concession to human frailty and arbitrariness and heathenism should be applied; on the contrary, the rule of Christ—to be one—is and should be the great desideratum.

After a careful review of Dr. Beets' *Zestig Jaren*, in which he practically surrenders the old grounds of secession held in 1857 and later, it is evident that he

also largely surrenders even the idea of "pluriformity of churches." That writer probably felt the inherent weakness of that argument as applied to the Reformed and Seceded Churches, so that he had recourse to the alleged "condition" in the union of 1850, as the only basis for the Secession of 1857. The argument of Dr. Beets seems to be that Dr. Wyckoff, in June, 1849, told the settlers that they could bid the Reformed Church adieu, and "be by themselves again," if anything should appear in the Reformed Church which "they did not like." Beets says, p. 101, that the Return of 1857 was *legal,* and was a *duty* (plichtmatig), on account of the violation of the condition. But, Dr. Wyckoff never used the words in the sense imputed to him, and this condition in the Union of 1850 was invented, not discovered, seven years later at Graafschap, as we shall show later on. The "condition" as advanced by the later Seceders is so un-Reformed, so heterodox, that it could not have existed in 1849 or 1850. The Seceders are, therefore, actually basing their whole secession on mere weaknesses (never held sufficient in Reformed Churches to justify secession), under an alleged "condition" which never could, and never did, exist. What that condition really was will appear fully later on; but this shifting of the basis of arguments for the Secession of 1857 is certainly calculated to arouse suspicion as to the correctness of the whole movement.

The present Christian Reformed Church is not a false Church, and the local churches in that denomination should not, and need not, be interfered with in their gospel work. That is not the question. Whatever their origin, the rule that where two or three are gathered *in His Name,* there He is in the midst, may well be given precedence here. But the only question at issue is whether the secessions of 1857 and 1882 were correct, and whether the terrible division of influence and power resulting therefrom is not infinitely worse for Reformed doctrines and life than any other assignable cause. The only real question involved in this whole controversy today is whether circumstances

warrant the continued separate existence of these two wings of the western Reformed people.

The writer, to show the error committed in 1857 and later, has been forced to have recourse to the great source-books of Reformed faith and practice such as Calvin and the acts of the different synods, and especially to Voetius, Van Prinsterer and Kuyper. The chapters on "The Church," "The Local Church," "What is a Reformed Church?" and on the "Police Rules of God's House," are closely built on these writers. Without a clear knowledge of these chapters or the substance thereof, no one can understand the religious controversy among our Hollanders, and such a one had better leave the matter at arm's length. The writer here makes a general acknowledgment of obligation to Reformed writers, especially to the writings of Dr. Kuyper and the most learned Groen Van Prinsterer, who is really the co-author of what the writer says on "What is a Reformed Church?"

In these papers the basis of Reformed doctrine and practice, etc., have been given in general terms, without going too much into detail. Only the historical bearings were aimed at. But it is suggested that a double purpose has been served in considering such questions; for in addition to their place in a proper discussion of the subject in hand, the knowledge of such things as the Netherlands Confession, Canons of Dort, etc., is fast dying among us, and it is hoped that the following pages will assist a little in familiarizing our people with the old landmarks the Fathers have set.

The papers following this series will take up the questions here left off. What people in Holland knew about the American Reformed Church eighty years ago, and what Van Raalte and the settlers learnt about this Church in the three years before 1850, will be followed by an analysis of the Union of 1850, and a discussion of the secessions of 1857 and 1882. That the writer has been forced to say so much on the Reformed Church in the East is not his fault, but that of the

careless slanders and libels of that Church by western Seceders, and especially by ignorant and incompetent writers.

For forty years or more the necessity of uncovering the old historic foundations laid before 1857, from the rubbish of false foundations imposed upon them, has existed. That this process of recovering the historical truth, resulting in the complete vindication of Van Raalte and the men of 1849-50 over against the men of 1857, was not long ago thoroughly worked out by the Reformed Church of the West, is not very creditable. Why should the Seceders have been allowed for years to set up false, or rather warped, standards of doctrine and polity, which had never before been heard of in Reformed Churches until the secession of 1834 and of 1857? And why was not the stand of Van Raalte and the men of 1850, squarely on recognized Reformed doctrine and practice, powerfully vindicated in detail in books as against the innovators of 1857? These Seceders have actually removed their neighbors' landmarks which they of old had set, and substituted for the old landmarks of Reformed doctrine and practice, new and somewhat spurious landmarks, conceived during the wildness of the disturbances of 1834 in Holland, and set them up in America in place of the old and tried landmarks. The few works by western writers such as Zwemer and De Bey's *Stemmen* (1871), N. H. Dosker's excellent little *Geschiedenis* (1887), and Dr. Dosker's *Van Raalte* (1893), are not comprehensive enough adequately to cover the subject, and it is hoped that some competent man will assume this larger task.

A thorough search among the records and the events of 1834-50, here and in Holland, will show still more clearly the correctness of the position assumed by Van Raalte and his people in their union with the Eastern Church, and the error of the disruption of that union in 1857.

The writer has counted on criticism from certain quarters, and he expects to be pilloried for presuming

to intimate that some of the efforts of the Seceders for church reformation were actually church deformation. He expects to be accused of desecrating the holy of holies. But such accusations are not arguments, and the claim of reforming the church is not always the equivalent of reformation. The writer, in all he says, has no quarrel with most of the local Christian Reformed Churches *per se* and their work; but the organization with which they are affiliated,—while it, of course, cannot be a decisive factor against their purity, —is, nevertheless, the cause of the division and loss of power of all the Reformed people of the West. The seceder churches above-mentioned, for a long time cursed with Antinomian tendencies, are today comparatively free from that flaw, and are, as a rule, active and powerful in life as well as in doctrine. And with this change for the better, it might have been considered prudent to maintain silence on the affairs of 1857. It is also evident that the present Christian Reformed Church has a long time since hoisted the white flag over the bastions and bulwarks of 1857,— which were the charges that the Reformed Church was false and corrupt,—and has retreated to the inner and weaker breastwork of the pluriformity of churches, meanwhile ceasing to fire upon the decoys and stalking horses of hymns, Sunday schools, picnics, funeral addresses, and "all other Protestant denominations."

But in 1918 a Daniel came to judgment. Dr. Henry Beets wrote a history of the secession churches in that year, and in his work he refuses to assume responsibility for, and to approve, all the reasons assigned for that Secession; he rejected the declaration of his own church, made in 1866, that the Reformed Church was a false church, and he intimates, rather softly, that there may and ought to be different denominations— pluriformity of churches. And while thus hurling in every direction the fragments of what little there was of a foundation to the Secession of 1857, he still defends that schism, not on account of falseness or fundamental corruption of the Reformed Church, but, it

seems, on account of a certain alleged "condition" incorporated into the union of the western Hollanders with the Reformed Church of the East in 1849-50. It was not, therefore, grievances or alleged grievances, upon which he bases the right of secesssion, but upon that alleged condition, which he claims gave the western people special privileges—a special right to secede on account of minor grievances or weaknesses not hitherto recognized as sufficient grounds for secession. And on what does Dr. Beets base his argument? On page 102 of his *Zestig Jaren*, he says that at the conference of Dr. Wyckoff, the representative of the Eastern Church, with Van Raalte and the "colonists," June 4, 1849, Dr. Wyckoff told the settlers "that they would be most perfectly free at any time they found an ecclesiastical connection opposed to their religious prosperity and enjoyment, to bid us a fraternal adieu and be by themselves again." And this is all Beets quotes in this connection from the rather interesting paragraph of Wyckoff. This ambassador of Christ, Dr. Beets, falls right into the middle, or rather, the end of the Wyckoff statement, without quoting the whole of it, and thus misleads, "probably not with a dishonest intention," his readers with a warped, mutilated, and therefore, false condition of union. A clergyman, especially, one would think, ought to have some regard for the connection in which a statement he quotes appears, for that is the only fair method of getting the sense of a writer. By completeness of quotation we find that our pet positions often get but scant support, and in the case in point the preconceived theory of Beets, or rather of Prof. Hemkes, of a "conditional union" receives a rude awakening when one reads the whole paragraph involved. What Wyckoff says over his own signature about this question is something radically different from a "condition." He said: "At the Classical meeting it was soon made known that the brethren were a little afraid of entering into ecclesiastical connection with us, although they believe in the union of brethren, and sigh for Chris-

tian sympathy and association. They have so felt to the quick the galling chains of ecclesiastical domination, and have seen with sorrow how exact organization, according to human rules, leads to formality on the one hand, and to oppression of tender conscience on the other, that they hardly knew what to say. I protested, of course, that it was the farthest from our thoughts to bring them in bondage to men, or to exercise ecclesiastical tyranny over them. And I stated they would be most perfectly free, at any time they found an ecclesiastical connection opposed to their religious prosperity and enjoyment, to bid us a fraternal adieu and be by themselves again."

On part of this paragraph the Seceders have finally landed as the main ground of their secession in 1857. Prof. Hemkes, in 1893, even changed Wyckoff's "a little afraid" into "bange vrees" (anxious fear); the Brochure writers, in 1869, deduced from it the fact that the people were not at ease (niet gerust) about the union. All these writers continue to insinuate that Van Raalte and his people were afraid of heterodoxy in the East. But, it is evident from what Wyckoff himself says, that they desired the union very much, and did not fear heterodoxy, but that, as he says, "They have so felt to the quick the galling chains of ecclesiastical domination," and "have seen with sorrow" "exact organization according to human rules," in the State Church and among the snarling elements of the factions of the Seceders in the Netherlands, "that they hardly knew what to say." And with that in view Wyckoff continues, "I protested, of course, that it was farthest from our thoughts to bring them into bondage to men, or to exercise ecclesiastical tyranny over them. And I stated that they would be most perfectly free, at any time they found an ecclesiastical connection opposed to their religious prosperity and enjoyment, to bid us a fraternal adieu, and be by themselves again." In this Wyckoff was uttering correct Reformed Dutch doctrine, for men may "bid a fraternal adieu" to a Christian Church, and even "be by them-

selves again," provided it be, as Calvin said, without "undue contention and obstinacy of assertion"; but that does not mean secession from all Protestant denominations as false and corrupt churches; and that does not imply that the few can claim that their religious prosperity and enjoyment are opposed whenever they attempt by un-Reformed innovations to kill the religious prosperity and enjoyment of every other believer. What Van Raalte and the men of 1849 were a little afraid of was not heterodoxy in the Eastern Church. On the contrary, they were mortally afraid of the very thing the Seceders in 1857 demanded, and for which, when they could get their own way, they seceded — namely bondage to men and ecclesiastical tyranny. If the Wyckoff paragraph contains a condition in addition to Reformed practice,—which it does not,—it was a condition which gave Van Raalte and his men a right to bid farewell to the Reformed Dutch Church if she ever permitted untutored, narrow-visioned radicals or extremists like the Seceders of Graafschap and Noordeloos in 1857, to establish ecclesiastical tyranny and bondage to men. This is the very opposite of what the Seceders claim. Wyckoff's condition, if it was a condition, was against, instead of in favor, of the Seceders.

Dr. Wyckoff's reference in the above is plainly to the "galling chains of ecclesiastical domination and "man-made rules"; and this reference is, besides, contained in a general report on the western Hollanders to the Mission Board of the Reformed Dutch Church. The General Synod of that Church had already declared the union of the East with the western Hollanders upon the reports of Rev. Van Raalte and the written request of the Classis of Holland, through the Part. Synod of Albany, a few days before the Wyckoff report was received as a part of the annual report of the Mission Board. Even so, Wyckoff's report had been scattered over the East in pamphlet form for the past ten months, and Wyckoff was a member of the Synod, and of the very committee which handled the

matter of union in June, 1850, and he and everybody else understood the paragraph in question to refer to what the whole paragraph says, namely, to freedom from church domination by man-made rules, and not to what only a part of the paragraph is twisted to refer to,—not to a freedom to secede on account of petty dissatisfactions, and not to a freedom of the few extremists either to rob the rest of the church of their freedom from domination by human rules, or, in case of the failure of such robbery, to secede irrespective of the dictates of real Reformed doctrine and practice.

If the Seceder Church of the West can surrender the strongholds of 1857, and can, as it were, water the wine of the vintage of 1857, and can gradually surrender on the questions of hymns, funeral sermons, picnics, church organs, life insurance, vaccination, and twenty or more similar questions, it is passing strange that this Church should now base her right of existence on a quotation split from the Wyckoff statement—a split first invented at Graafschap, Mich., in March, 1857, in order to form a "condition" to lend color to the insufficient reasons alleged to justify the secession there. No one in the "Colony," or in the Wyckoff Conference, or in the two synods of the Reformed Church in 1850, dreamed that, to gather the real sense of a paragraph, it should be cut in two, and the first half suppressed and thrown away. On the contrary, every one interpreted the paragraph as a whole—that the Reformed Church would not permit any one to set up a lordship over the faith as the State Church in the Netherlands had done. It is not complimentary to the western branch of the Reformed Church that it has not long ago, especially since 1893, when the real architect of this "conditional union," Rev. Hemkes, wrote his *Rechtsbestaan,* thoroughly written up the whole history of the first ten or fifteen years of the colonial churches, including the union of 1849-50.

The writer has prepared another series of papers in which the whole matter of "conditional union" is fully considered. And be it said in advance, that there

is not a scrap of admissible evidence in the writer's possession,—and he has investigated all the claims in the books and pamphlets of the Seceders,—that discloses the existence anywhere of the alleged "condition" in the union of 1850, until its invention in 1857. And it certainly would be a mistake to fail to call the attention of our people to the hollowness of the so-called "condition"—a condition so baseless as to be an egregious blunder, yes, a crime against the truth of history.

However, while in the said second series of papers the principles and the evidence presented in this series will be directly applied to the origin and history of the secessions of 1857 and 1882, it must be stated here, that in his research thus far, it has become evident to the writer that (1), The institution which has so long held sway among the western Hollanders, and which claims that it has received from God blank writs of ejectment from the church and from heaven, which it can fill in and serve at its pleasure on those who differ from it, seems, finally, to be nodding to its fall. But (2), that the rank and file of the western churches, regular and seceded, so far as knowledge of the history and the greatness of the Reformed faith of our fathers, especially its importance in the struggle for the liberties of the world three centuries ago, are sorely in need of a veritable resurrection from the dead.

In this and the other historical inquiries, the writer's object was not to minimize or deny in toto the efforts, hopes and aspirations of the Seceders for purity in doctrine and practice, nor to condone their extreme and arbitrary actions, nor yet to palliate laxities in the Reformed Churches. His whole object is to ascertain the truth and to further unity and co-operation of all Reformed forces, "beginning at Jerusalem."

The writer in his research came upon texts like Acts 19:8-9, so often that it is pertinent to call attention to the erroneous use of that and similar texts as a basis for secession from a Christian Church. Acts

19, verses 8 and 9, reads: "And he [Paul], entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus." Paul, it is evident, had a hard task. He was trying to start a Christian church in an anti-Christian synagogue, where many spake evil of the Way; and so Paul separates the good ones, the disciples, takes them out of the world, and organizes them into a Christian church. In all this Paul did not secede from a Reformed or a Methodist church, but from an anti-Christian association. Methodists do not speak evil of the Way, but travel the Way. Most of the objections of the Seceders of 1822 and 1882 were that the Reformed Church was too friendly with Methodists. Methodists, however, are not Jewish synagogues from which to secede as Paul did at Ephesus; and there is still less support in texts like Acts 19 for seceding from the Reformed Churches.

While it was with some hesitation that these papers are made public, it is certain that some one, some time, will have to speak as the writer has done, and if that is so, then the sooner it is done the better. The later Seceder writers have brought upon themselves the condemnation meted out to them. They merit even severer censures than those the writer has passed upon them, if for nothing else than for their speaking evil before the multitude about the Reformed Dutch Church without knowing what they were talking about. Even Dr. Beets, while he praises the Reformed Church for her "comparative conservatism" and "missionary labors," and gladly ranks her as a part of Christ's Church on earth (*Zestig Jaren,* pp. 107 and 119), and generally concedes the unsoundness of the accusations of falseness against her, still speaks of her as "that English Church," "that American Church," and "that strange Church" (die vreemde Kerk), *Zestig Jaren,*

pp. 104-105. And all this of a Church that knew Reformed doctrine and practice, and the history of Holland, far better than any of the immigrants who came here from Holland after 1846!

In order to do justice to all concerned, the writer will not withhold his meed of praise for the desires and efforts of some of the Seceders for a pure church in their midst; but when those Seceders, through their own writers, lead the way to the abandonment of their own foundations laid in 1857, they cannot blame others for subjecting to the acid test of Reformed doctrine and practice their other and later claims for continued separate existence. The gradual surrender of the grounds of 1857 by the present Christian Reformed Church, as evidenced in its history of the last thirty years, has to that extent freed that secession from much of the charge of being a standing accusation of dishonesty and deception against Van Raalte, his people, Dr. Wyckoff, and the Reformed Synods of 1850; and were it not that a "condition" is forced into the union of 1850, which, if true, involved the right of the few extremists for purity, and even heretics, to consider their own religious prosperity and enjoyment to consist in the destruction of the religious prosperity and enjoyment of everybody else—a monstrosity in the whole Reformed system—the writer would have maintained silence. But as matters stand today, developments in the Seceder Churches show conclusively that the men of 1857 committed an error in thus running amuck of Calvinistic and Reformed doctrine and practice, which has to be, and is being, undone gradually by their successors. But however this may be, in the writer's judgment the importance of the matters placed in jeopardy by the continuation of the religious separation of the western Hollanders warrants the efforts for closer association aimed at by him. Offense will necessarily be given by referring to the records of the past, but let it be remembered that it is wrong to take offense at the truth of history, and that it is always right to tell the truth, no matter where it

strikes. The writer, though without illusions on the subject, hopes that the time is near when what happened in the Netherlands in 1892 will happen here, and that we may soon be able to speak of the "Reformed Churches in America." But whatever happens there should be no undue haste. It is necessary that the Seceders of the West first of all should know that their predecessors were the ones who broke the ecclesiastical unity without a scriptural warrant therefore, and that, therefore, in that secession of 1857 all is not gold that glitters.

The writer is satisfied that in writing about the ecclesiastical affairs of the western Hollanders as he has done, he runs but little risk of an unfavorable comparison with writers like Hemkes and Beets. It is not possible to make a bigger failure of the work than those black-cloth writers have done, for they actually wrote the history of the religious wars among the Hollanders, with the *history* left out, and with the claims and inventions of later Seceders substituted in the place of the history of 1846-56. It is high time that the scalpal of history and of logic be applied to the ecclesiastical affairs of the "Pilgrim Fathers of the West," in order that the truth crushed to earth by writers who maintain that history still justifies the schism of 1857, when they themselves are surrendering the old foundations, and substituting new ones therefore, may rise again. The writer therefore began with the beginning—Reformed doctrine and practice as applied in the churches of Dort and in the Reformed Dutch Church, and those again applied to the church affairs of the "Colony." This method involves testing the settlers, and especially the Seceders, by what was and is really Reformed, instead of testing Reformed doctrine and practice by the standard of the few inexperienced and opinionated leaders of the secession among those settlers.

III. THE VOICE OF THE "MOTHER CHURCH" IN HOLLAND

A FEW years ago, while investigating certain phases of the early history of the Holland settlements in Michigan, the writer came upon the religious relations of the settlers so often, that it was impossible to understand their colonial history without inquiry into the ecclesiastical concerns of those Pilgrim Fathers of seventy-five years ago. And while such inquiry led back to a series of facts at the basis of the religious wars which have disgraced the Hollanders in the West, and the discussion of which is likely even now to cause resentment and contention, the writer's excuse for speaking about these religious battles now is that nothing can be gained, but a great deal lost, by allowing wrong conceptions to be held and disseminated about the terrible state of affairs that has existed among us for sixty years or more.

On the road from Holland to Drenthe, there is, or was, a hill, about three miles east of Holland, whence could be seen, some forty years ago, in different directions, the white steeples of some ten or twelve Dutch churches. These were all country churches; and the prominence in the landscape of the "village church among the trees," "pointing with taper spire to heaven," while characteristic of most of the Holland settlements in America, is yet such an unusual thing for those who know the rationalistic and Unitarian Netherlands of the last hundred years, that it is necessary to note that the bulk of the emigration from Holland to America since 1847 was composed of the poorer and less refined Netherlanders, not as yet saturated

with rationalistic doctrine. There are today some fifty of these Dutch Churches in Ottawa and Allegan counties alone, almost all in the Black River basin, and the history of these churches tells the history of the "colony" very well indeed.

Wherever church spires spring white in the sky, there, we know, people are looking for *Repos Ailleurs*, Rest Elsewhere. There they are looking for the City of God, the new Jerusalem, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." And it is true that the presence of so many flourishing churches among the Hollanders in America shows that a really strong religious principle is at work among them. But upon closer examination, the fact stares us in the face that among these Hollanders we find at each place not one — but two — churches, sometimes at swords' points, and bitter in their relations. Both unquestionably active and zealous, but in their relations with other churches, heathenish and un-Christian. How this came to pass, will appear later, but that it was so from about 1857 cannot be denied.

Here are two denominations existing side by side in the same field, composed of people who trace their pedigree to the land of dikes and dunes, and to the heroic Church of the Eighty Years War. The Forms and Rules of these churches were born out of the exigencies of Holland's War for political and religious freedom, when the question of Church Rules especially was uppermost in the minds of people. Several times during the Eighty Years War the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands made Church Rules to suit the requirements of the times, it is true; but the Rules adopted by these different synods were not abrogated or repealed absolutely by succeeding synods; nor were the Rules of Dort (1619) ever used as iron rules in the Churches of Holland; deviations were permitted, because it was a part of Reformed doctrine that

Church Rules could not and therefore should not, compel the consciences of believers. The old Church of Holland, therefore, always recognized the work of previous synods, and the Rules adopted from Wesel to Dort were always printed in the Church Handbook together. The Reformed Dutch Church in New York and New Jersey, while printing, in 1792, in her Constitution the Rules of Dort of 1619 only, refers to and adheres, in her Explanatory Articles, to the rules of preceding synods in several instances where Dort had varied from former synods; and these variations, in part, gave rise in 1792 to these very Explanatory Articles. The seceder synod of 1840 in Holland, while re-adopting the "Rules of Dort," re-adopted the rules of preceding synods also, for qualification and clarification of the Rules of Dort, and printed them all in the Handbook of 1840. And when Rev. A. C. Van Raalte and the Holland immigrants in Michigan organized their first Classis in 1848, they adopted "the whole Handbook of 1840 as expressing the system of Reformed Church government." And because there was conflict between the Rules of those different synods, and because the matter of Church Rules in the Netherlands was at this time in such inextricable confusion, this Holland Classis also made, and was obliged to make, special rulings on matters of feast-days, catechetical instruction, etc., to suit their local needs and desires. The expression "Rules of Dort" refers therefore not to the Rules as written at Dordrecht in 1619, but rather to the Rules as used and applied by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands after the Synod of Dort, 1619. The expression means rather the Rules the churches of Dort used until 1816, carrying with them, of course, the rules of preceding synods, and especially the declaration of the first synod held at Wesel in 1568, known as the Preface of Wesel, to show "the spirit and tendency of the Fathers." This Preface is the basis of all Reformed Church government today. It explained to a hair the limitations of Church Rules, and forever destroyed lordship over God's heritage in

Reformed churches. This grand work of the Fathers at Wesel was lost during the Secession of 1834 in old Holland for years, and was forgotten by the leaders of the Secession in Michigan in 1857. Certainly in that secession the reports of heterodoxy in the Eastern Church, spread by the True Reformed Dutch Church (a small secession in the East in 1822), had some effect, but these reports were so one-sided that they were ignored entirely in one of the main official declaration of the Seceders of 1857. That declaration is entirely based on misconceptions of what were really Reformed Church Rules, as it mentioned no doctrinal objections to the Eastern Church. It is undeniable that the main difference between the two warring factions of the Western Reformed people centered for a long time round this difference of conception of the words "Rules of Dort." The Seceders in their books clearly restricted the words too much to the Rules as written at Dordrecht, while the Reformed people held them to be "the whole Handbook," with the Rules of all the synods from Wesel to Dort, in the spirit of the Preface laid down at Wesel. That the Seceders in 1857 were wrong is admitted by their own Church, which has made several radical changes in the Dort Rules, not to mention several additions thereto.

But however the secession came to pass, the results of it are with us today,—altar against altar, church against church, school against school, and seminary against seminary. For years since 1857, ecclesiastically it was hell in the Colony. Good fences make good neighbors when you have to be neighbors; but good fences make poor families when you should live as a family. According to Reformed doctrine and practice, the difference in views regarding Church Rules in 1857 did not justify secession; and according to Reformed doctrine and practice, the reports of heresy in the East, spread by the followers of Fraeligh, and accepted, to some extent in the West, without knowledge of the awful failure of the Labadistic and Antinomian heresies of those Eastern Seceders of 1822, did not justify

secession in 1857. If the Church of God were a mere human institution, we would concede the right of the Seceders of 1857 "to be by themselves again"; but so long as the Church is a divine institution we are bound, not by dissatisfaction or anger or the use of feast-days, or stories of heresy, but by the Reformed Standards based on the Word of God. According to the Scriptures, "seceding from all Protestant denominations" is heresy, even, as Calvin says, "if some fault exists in the preaching or the administration of the sacraments."

The Free Masonry question interjected into the life of the Western Reformed Churches, in 1880, and later, is not considered by impartial judges competent to rule on such questions, as was the late Dr. Kuyper, as presenting insuperable barriers to the fusion of the Seceded Churches of the West with the Reformed Church in America. That question, nevertheless, seems to present the chief obstacle to union. Some Seceders, it must be conceded, think the failure of the Reformed Church to emphasize Predestination and Election is the main objection to union. This matter of emphasis, however, is not a fundamental difference, but is simply a matter of degrees of emphasis. The insistence on purity in doctrine cannot be wrong, but the over-insistence on pure doctrines always destroys the purity of an active Christianity. Furthermore, the doctrine of secession as a means to purify a church does not always hold good. The reflex action of a secession based on mere weaknesses in a Church, leading, as it does, to a rank phariseeism in the seceder, is always injurious to the church seceded from, for by their excesses the Seceders make the real cause of Christianity very unattractive to all others. The pietistic extravagance of the Seceders of 1857 made many a man in the "Colony" lose his faith entirely. Religiosity and hyper-orthodoxy are the allies of infidelity and lukewarmness always. The present Christian Reformed Church of the West is not the Seceder Church of 1857, nor anything like it, except, perhaps, in its desire for

doctrinal purity. That Church today is far superior to what the "True Church," as she once called herself, was in 1870. She is no longer seceded from all other Protestant denominations; and her active churches, her many excellent pastors and teachers, her piety and great sacrifices for the Cause of Christ, entitle her to a place among the Churches of the Reformation. No matter how irregular and erroneous her origin may have been, it stands no one in hand to class the Christion Reformed Church of the West as a false church; but still less may any one class the Reformed Church as a false church. These two have no right to exist side by side as they have done for the last sixty years. The difference in conception of Church Rules and of the emphasis to be placed on the doctrine of Election and allied doctrines, do not justify the rank jealousy, and the splitting in two of the strength of religion among them, as has been the case for sixty years. These two Churches have no right to a separate existence under the law of Christ, so long as they "say the same thing" on essential doctrines.

It was easy work for a few leaders among the Hollanders during the eighties to agitate, and to condemn Free Masonry, when they were not affected directly by the problem; but the presence of anything that has gained more or less of a foothold, as Masonry had in the East, is not so easily disposed of. Judges, like Dr. Kuyper, in the Netherlands, not directly connected with the two wings of the Reformed Churches of the West, can pass a better judgment on that question than we ourselves can. With his eyes squarely on the matter of union of all the Holland churches of the West, and not unmindful of the old Hollanders of the East, one of the latest utterances of Dr. Kuyper on the Free Masonry question as affecting the union of the two churches among the Hollanders is very striking proof of the fact that he did not think Free Masonry at all a sufficient *casus belli* to justify the division of the Holland Churches in the West. The dispute about Free Masonry will be discussed in con-

nection with the affairs of 1882, but the following words of Dr. Kuyper are appropriate here. In his Varia Americana, pp. 79-84, Dr. Kuyper wrote as follows:—"It was, then, the Dutch Reformed Church which Van Raalte and the colonists joined in 1849 [1850], and it is much to be regretted that later all kinds of differences about Free Masonry and discipline led to the formation of a group of churches over against the Reformed Church.

"We leave the dispute alone, but there is no doubt that nothing has weakened the position of the Dutch element more than just this schism (scheuring).

"Politically, the Dutch element in America cannot organize itself. This would be a wrong procedure, not authorized under the constitution; but that is no reason why the valuable and powerful characteristics of religion in the Netherlands cannot be maintained and emphasized in their ecclesiastical life. The clergymen are the leaders, and if they divide and quarrel, the people do likewise, and thus the power and the unity of the Hollanders is broken.

"With this in view, we cannot insist too strongly upon the union of these two elements, and we are convinced that we speak for every well-informed Netherlander who sees the great danger that this break will threaten the honor and future of our race in America.

"So much misconception crept in, that people stumbled on account of things indifferent (bijzaken), instead of keeping in view the foundation (grondslag) of church life. Especially did the Free Masonry question clearly bring this to view. Those who came to America from Holland began to be offended, for in the Netherlands Masonry is very decidedly, and on principle, opposed to belief in Revelation. But in America this is entirely different. Masonry came from England to America [not from the continent where it was inimical], and bore a very different character, and even the idea was not wanting that Masonry did nothing but propagate Christian truth under symbolical forms."

Quoting a long article in the N. Y. Tribune of Nov. 27, 1906, about the Christianization of Masonry, the learned Dr. Kuyper continues: "Is it then so incomprehensible that many members of the Reformed Church viewed Masonry from a different angle, and did not share the alarm or offense (ergernis) felt by those who came from the Netherlands? And even conceding that these men were mistaken, that the Christianization of Free Masonry is an illusion, and that the fruit of this order always turns itself against Christianity,—still it follows from this that misconception alone could lead to the conclusion to impute to Masonry an animus (opzet), which is far removed from it. We do not doubt, then, for a moment that the new efforts which may be looked for to heal the breach, will be built upon another, a more fundamental basis, and on a stronger conception of church government (kerkregt), and that the day is not far off in which both elements, one in ecclesiastical origin, will be united."

Dr. Kuyper, in the same connection, refers to the interesting and inspiring history of the "Colonists of 1847," and to the fact that they in their lives held in high honor the Dutch name and traditions. But Kuyper insists that it should be the prayer of all "that the one black mark (zwarte stip) of their ecclesiastical division may be expunged from the pages of that history."

After everything is said about the secession churches in the Netherlands, it is clear that those churches view the breach of Joseph among the Hollanders in America as inexcusable. The attitude of the Seceder Synod in old Holland after 1892 is not even so conclusive on this point as the tone of her leading writers. Rev. A. Littooy of Middelburg was president of the Synod of 1869, when the "churches Under the Cross" joined, and he was a man of the highest standing in the Secession Church. He says he was not cast out by the State Church, but went out because the State Church forced Rationalists into orthodox churches, and therefore did not permit the worship of

God according to the Word. Littooy and the Secession Church clave to the doctrine of autonomy of the local churches, and when the State Church and the Synod of The Hague had made Church Rules which forbade the local church to enforce discipline against the unbelieving rationalists or modernists forced on them, they seceded because they could not serve God in accordance with the Word. The whole question was: Could they serve God as his Word directs? If they could not, they must secede. Littooy further says, "I do not even ask, 'Do they serve God according to his Word in the State Church?' If they can, but do not, it is merely a question of practice, and the State Church is not then corrupt in foundation." It is evident that the Dutch Secession Churches rest their whole case on the interference of the State Church with the worship in the local churches as prescribed in the Bible, as instanced principally in forcing them to receive from other churches those not sound in doctrine.

Rev. Littooy, in 1885, wrote a little book, entitled, "Onze Gescheiden Broeders Hadden Ook Moeten Blijven. Is Dat Waar?" On page 36, he says, "The word 'church' means we are the Lord's, and the Lord's we are when we obey Him. The invisible church we do not know; God knows it, and He alone; and according to our Confession, we must join ourselves, not to the invisible church, but to the visible, that is, the church of Christ that appears in visible form, to the church which has tangible marks (waarneembare merkteekenen). The invisible body of Christ assumes on this side of the grave, an attitude—a garment or vesture—which will be discarded in the end when Jesus separates the wheat from the chaff. This vesture must be conformable to the real, or there is no evidence of a church. The church of Christ must manifest itself in its true nature as a light shining in darkness, and a city set on a hill, and the church must put away an un-Christian vesture as quickly as the individual sinner is required to do."

On p. 12, the necessity of discipline in families, cities, and nations is shown, and "all these spheres belong to the earthly dispensation and are designed for this life, while the Church of Christ is everlasting, and will be perfected in heaven. Her sphere is therefore the holiest, most consecrated. And shall, nevertheless, in this consecrated ground alone, everything be allowed to grow? Can and may all live here without distinction? Or must not rather, on this holy ground, where there are no natural, social, or patriotic bonds, in the ordinary sense, but where faith, one in Christ, makes one body, the holy things of God be maintained by men most tenderly, faithfully and purely? The answer is yes, and God's Church will not therefore deteriorate, or be destroyed like Eli and his sons, "naturally *not* because God needs us, but because he wants to use us in every sphere of life, and has therefore ordained discipline, not only by the Holy Spirit, but also by men." The ordinary texts relative to discipline are then given, and Littooy says, "These words were spoken, not to God, but by God to men." He then shows that in the State Church of Holland, orthodox churches are compelled to receive unbelievers from other churches into membership and to the communion, etc., and he calls this submission to the Synod of the State Church, "obeying men rather than God." He next calls attention to the responsibility of the congregation for neglect of doctrine and discipline, and refers specifically to the texts in Rev. 2, which show the responsibility of local churches.

On p. 20, Littooy says, "According to Christian and Reformed principles, rules of church control (kerkrecht) may never dominate the Scriptures and Confession, but confession and church rules are subject to, and must be distilled from, the Bible, and must be in accordance therewith." On p. 21 he says, "Only where the history of the Church of the Fatherland is in accord with the Scriptures and the Confession based thereon, can her lessons and practice be an example to us. The statement 'thus and so did the fathers,' some-

times is made as if that settled all, without an appeal to the Bible; but that is simply making the fathers God, and their acts and omissions a rule of life. History is at best an imperfect realization of what God expresses in his Word and in the Confession." On p. 22, it is "Church rules and acts of the fathers cannot override or displace the Word and the Confession."

The main question—Our Seceded Brethren Should Also Have Remained. Is That True?—Littooy answered as follows, "People could not, and were not permitted to worship God in accordance with His Word in the Netherlands Reformed (State) Church, any more than in the Roman Catholic Church before and since the Reformation. All-destroying unbelief had gained a stronger right of existence in the Netherlands Church than in the Roman Catholic"; and on p. 10, "Could we, and can we, worship God in accordance with His Word in the Netherlands Church? Many a time our father Brummelkamp repeated the words, 'Show me the place in your Church where I can be a preacher of the Word, that is, can serve God according to that Word, and I will come.' And I say: Show me the place, and I will come.

"Since (p. 11) we are agreed that it is an unavoidable duty to serve God according to His Word and will, the question is answered. Could we, and can we, serve God according to His Word in the Netherlands Reformed Church, then the secession stands condemned; then it is true 'The Seceded Brethern should have remained'; but could we not, and can we not do so, then the secession is justified, and is from God. Then remaining is condemned, condemned as unfaithfulness to God's holy commands and institutions"; and on p. 23, "So we come to the great question whether in the Netherlands Reformed Church we can serve God in accordance with His Word and the Confession. For where we cannot so serve Him, there we may not be or remain. We must be faithful to God, even though the magistrates and the edicts of princes were against it.

"And now I do not even ask, Do people serve God in the Netherlands Reformed Church, according to the Word and Confession? but I only ask, Can they? If they *can*, but *do not* do so, it is simply a question of practice; in that case the church is not corrupt in her foundations (hare levenswortel)."

Rev. Littooy, on p. 25 of his pamphlet, says, "Every member who remains in a State Church, lives, according to the Word and Confession, in an unauthorized communion, in a heaven-defying state, and under a satanic power which does not permit him to worship the Lord in accordance with the Scriptures. On p. 28, he says, "Those who do not believe in the Trinity, in the doctrine of the Covenants, and the complete sacrifice of Christ, in your Church, are desecrators of the sacraments." On p. 41, he says, "The State Church forces her members to do what they may not do. For example: She forces her members to be members in the same Church with unbelievers, to vote with them, and to sit at the same Lord's table."

Not a reference does Rev. Littooy make to the doctrine of solidaire (common) responsibility of one church for the acts of the other churches in the denomination; nor does he rely on objections to the use of hymns, or other points of practice in the State Church. On the contrary, he founds his whole argument for the Secession Churches in Holland on the active interference by the State Church with discipline and doctrine in the local churches.

If the logic of the Secession Churches of Holland is applied to the situation in the Reformed Churches in America in 1857 or 1882, did the Reformed Dutch Church in any particular legislate so that the Seceders at Graafschap and Noordeloos could not worship God according to His Word? Did the Reformed Church in 1880-82 interfere with the discipline or doctrine of the local churches in the West on the Free Masonry question? She did nothing of the kind, but the local churches remained in supreme control as they ought to be.

The writer is aware of the fact that some of the Western Seceders claim the difference between the western churches lies deeper than the question of hymns and Free Masonry, and that important doctrines are involved; but the correct attitude on doctrines like Election, Depravity, Perseverance of Saints, etc., is to be ascertained from Calvin and the different Synods of the Reformed Churches in the world, and not from the Seceders of 1882 or 1857. Reformed Churches always allowed certain liberties on doctrinal points, and even, according to the New Testament, the Seceders of the West or the Christian Reformed Church of the West never had the right to abridge such liberties. Dr. H. H. Kuyper of the Seceded Churches in Holland, and a son of the great Dr. Kuyper, recently wrote on Freedom of Conscience as follows: "In the service of God there is no yoke of human authority, and the conscience is bound by God's Word only. The Confession, Art. 7, says these holy scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. It is forbidden to add to or take from the Bible. No man, nor an angel from heaven, teaching otherwise, can dictate to the consciences. Only God's Scriptures are the chronometer by which all spiritual watches are regulated. Each man may not always act according to the voice of his conscience, but is bound by God—not man. The Romish church interposed its church powers as interpreter, its priests between man and his Maker, and imposed the traditions and decisions of the church as really essential to salvation. Believers of Rome are slaves, but Protestants are their own priests and judges. They are servants of God, not of men, and are bound only by God.

"The believer is in the last analysis not bound by the interpretation of the church, which has no controlling, but only a serving power, and a man may after long study question the church's position, without violating his conscience. The church must respect the consciences of members who honestly differ, and if the

difference is on matters not involving directly the question of salvation, we must be patient and indulgent. In questions of doctrine, as well as conduct, there must be a certain freedom, of course, within defined principles of the Scriptures. Nothing is more opposed to the Spirit of the Reformed Churches than when officers or those who are further advanced in matters of faith,—even if their insight into Scripture is deeper, and their conclusions more correct—force others to bend before their ideas. Not our understanding of Scriptures, but the Bible itself, binds the conscience of our brother."

Apart from the Christian liberties, the danger of placing too much emphasis on doctrinal points or on discipline has been exposed thoroughly by the scholars and synods of the Reformed Church, and the unbalancing of doctrines has been by them condemned in no uncertain sounds. The attitude of the Seceder Church of the West from 1857 almost to the present time has been marred by its over-emphasis of certain doctrines and a harping on discipline, while the preaching of the pre-eminence of Love has been the rather outstanding feature of the Reformed Dutch Church.

Discipline and doctrine are not everything. The Church at Ephesus could not bear them which were evil, or those who claimed to be apostles and were not. This, however, did not save her, for the Lord said, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." This characterization of Ephesus could be applied to the Seceders of the West rather aptly till about twenty years ago, while some of the Reformed Churches may have erred on the other side. If the Bible is the Word of God, there is room enough for improvement, and while the divisions and contentions continue, placing wreaths on the grave of departed greatness in Holland, and swearing by the deeds of William of Orange and

Admiral De Ruyter bring us nowhere. The division of the Hollanders in America into two churches, with the same standards, and largely the same aspirations and objects, is a scandal that cannot be explained to others in a satisfactory manner. And those among us who persist in magnifying and protracting the differences between those two churches, in defiance of the rule of Christian charity, are simply airing acquired prejudice, without regard to the first love Ephesus had lost.

The writer desires to contribute a little to the reconciliation of the western people of the Reformed Calvinistic persuasion. It may be objected, however, that the following papers widen the breach instead of closing it; but before a union can take place, it is imperative that the historical facts out of which the secession here arose should be exposed completely. Two or three writers among the Seceders,—the authors of the Brochure of 1869, Rev. Hemkes' *Rechtbestaan* and Rev. Kuiper's *Tijdwoord*,—form the basis of the defense of the Seceders as incorporated in Rev. Beets' History of the Secession, published in 1918. These works are not history in the best sense; they are nothing but defenses of the secession of 1857, which actually turn the historical facts of 1834-1857, affecting the ecclesiastical relations of the immigrant Hollanders upside down. These writers, in order to furnish a defense for Haan in 1856 and for the Seceders of 1857, would have us believe that Van Raalte and the overwhelming majority of the "colonists" of 1849-50 turned their backs on the standpoint of the Seceders in old Holland after 1834, and surrendered the distinctive features of the Calvinistic Churches when they joined hands with the Reformed Dutch Church of the East. These seceder writers labor to make Haan and Graafschap the rule, and Van Raalte and all the rest the exception; and, as a result, the Secession Church of the Netherlands, though actually condemned as an impure church by the Michigan Seceders in 1870-71, has been pictured as the "Mother of the Secession

Church" in our midst. In such a representation of historical facts the extreme radicals of the Dutch Secession were the Secession Church, the Reformed Dutch Church in the East was a heretical church, and the terribly Labadistical Seceders of 1822 were the Calvinists; Van Raalte and the vast majority who stood on the "whole Handbook of 1840," including the Church Rules of the synods from Wesel to Dort with the great Preface of Wesel, were rebels, and Dam, Krabshuis, Smit and Schepers, with the Rules of 1619, and insistence on feast-days and psalms and objection to funeral sermons, picnics, Sunday schools, etc., were the regulars. As a matter of history nothing is farther from the truth. The Mother of the Western Seceded Church was really the few Churches Under the Cross of the Kampen district, seceded from the Seceders, while Van Raalte's people represented the general principles of the Seceders of 1834. The Eastern Reformed Church was an experienced church, which had already fought out many of the problems which ensnared the Western Seceders fifty years later. The dark pages of the Secession in New Jersey in 1822 were not known by the Western Seceders in 1857; so that they, not Van Raalte, can be accused of acting without arming themselves with proper information and without due consideration. In fact, what Rev. Beets says on the years 1846-1857, based on the other writers mentioned, is not based upon the records of that time, but upon what was later produced by prejudiced Seceders, and written up by such actors as Revs. Van der Werp, Hemkes and Kuiper. The minutes of all the local churches were largely ignored, and yet those minutes, written when no one knew a secession would take place in 1857, and when the efforts of the different consistories and the classis were directed towards unity and harmony and justice, with no motive to injure or misrepresent any one, are, with the Classis' minutes, the very source of genuine information, where the loquacity of those few belligerent mischief-makers had the least chance to give a false im-

press to historical facts. The Seceder writers rely on what Van der Werp and Kuiper gathered at Graafschap—the place where knowledge of Reformed doctrine and practice were scarcest. It is remarkable that the Seceder writers mentioned, had never read the minutes of 1849-57 of any of the local churches, except those of Graafschap. Rev. Beets clearly never even read the minutes of the Classis of Holland; and all these writers failed to investigate the record of the Reformed Dutch Church from 1800-1850, except as it appears in the one-sided statements of the Seceders of 1822 and 1824.

A more deliberate misrepresentation of the Reformed Dutch Church and of the colonial churches of 1847-57, cannot be imagined than what those writers foist upon the public as history. The writer of these pages, after he had read the Classis minutes, and those of the local churches, and the minutes of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, and after he had read Brakel and Calvin on Secession, and compared them with the Confession, Catechism and the Canons of Dort, was astonished at the effrontery of the apologists for the Seceders of 1857 in claiming that those Seceders alone stood on Reformed ground. They were not Reformed, they were off the track, and nothing shows this so completely as that those Seceders, after years of awful contentions in their own ranks, only found comparative peace when they returned somewhat to the practice of Christian liberties in the government of the Church.

Whatever is said in these and succeeding papers is based on written and printed records of the times referred to, while whatever bears the marks of invention of later times has been avoided as questionable. Reformed doctrine has been ascertained not at Graafschap or Noordeloos or Grand Rapids, but from Synods, and from writers like Calvin and Brakel. In considering the law of Secession, the writer consulted not so much what Calvin and Brakel said about Baptism or the Lord's Supper, but what they said on Secession,

which is the point in question. The references throughout to Calvin's Institutes are to Allen's translation. Wherever reference is made to the acts of a Synod or Classis or Consistory, with assignment of date, the meaning is that the matter can be found in the respective minutes of that date.

It should be noted that in these and succeeding studies, characters like Haan, Krabhuis and Rev. Van der Werp are criticized rather severely. But they themselves are to blame, and the truth of history requires that we do not make of these men, regardless of what they did and said in utter violation of truth, of Reformed doctrine and practice, of the law of love prescribed in the New Testament, heroes of the faith because they are dead. These men, particularly Rev. R. T. Kuiper, slandered Dr. Van Raalte, and labored to besmirch his record, and to falsify the history of the Holland settlement so as to suit their own purposes, for which they really deserve, at the bar of history, the severest condemnation. There were, no doubt, among those who did not secede, many who were guilty of harshness and slander, but the writer has been surprised at the mildness of works like Zwemer and De Bey's *Stemmen,* N. H. Dosker's *History,* and Dr. Dosker's *Van Raalte.* Both the Doskers show they understood the question of secession thoroughly. The "Levenschets van Van Raalte" by Dr. Dosker is a masterpiece, whose only serious defect is its brevity. N. H. Dosker's History of the Reformed Church in the Dutch language is good, but on account of its brevity does not give the subject adequate treatment. Koppenaal's Toelichting (1893) is excellent in its treatment of the nature of the Church, and this author was the equal in knowledge of the subject in hand of any clergyman who touched the subject.

It is beyond the writer's comprehension why the Reformed Church did not long ago republish the innumerable articles found in the Intelligencer and other papers to which her people had access, showing the complete information she had on every move in the

religious life of old Holland from 1810 till 1850, and why the record of her negotiation and experiences with the State Church about the Borneo Mission were not scattered broadcast among the Hollanders of the West. Is there nobody home in the Reformed Church? Why should the West be flooded continually with the lop-sided claims of Fraeligh and his few followers, when such an excellent defense existed in the East? In the West, Reformed clergymen seem to know neither side of that question, while the Seceders know only one side, and that the wrong one. Frankly, the writer is disgusted with the failure of the Reformed Church to publish and spread the perfect defense existing. In 1857 and some years later such efforts would have been futile, when some of the poor ignorant Hollanders had itching ears, and knew it all, while they did not know the first lessons in the school of Christ; but during the last thirty years the exposure of the great failure of that Secession of 1822 would have done a great deal of good.

Finally, no union of the Western people is possible, so long as men like Van der Werp and Haan are canonized as saints. The acts of such men must be tested as much by what Van Prinsterer wrote as by Verhagen, and rather by what Calvin wrote than by the writings of Hemkes. The Reformed Church and the Classis of Holland were in 1857 the existing church, and the Seceders broke away from that church; for which secession they must stand trial as disturbers and inverters of the established conditions in the Colonial Churches. It is possible that the reader will consider that the sentences passed on the leaders of the Secession of 1857 and their apologists as too strong; but in a historical inquiry, especially dealing with religious concerns of vital interest, it is the facts we want, and nothing but facts; and the Seceder writers have not given the facts of 1846-57 as they happened and existed, but have given a perverted statement of facts involving seriously the reputation of the men of 1849-50, Van Raalte included. It is time to call attention

to this perversion of history. And if the strong religious principles of the Western Hollanders are to flower and produce good fruit, the fruit can be increased four-fold by unity. But a union attempted, without a thorough understanding of our early Colonial history on both sides, cannot stand. The Reformed Church can afford to respect the desires of the Seceders for pure doctrine and discipline, and co-operate; but the separated Churches must understand, the sooner the better, that the Secession of 1857 was absolutely wrong, and that such acts as the casting out recently of Rev. Bultema, a clergyman of the strictest orthodoxy, on account of his premillenarian views, has no lawful place in a Reformed Church, where there must be no lordship over the faith as in the Roman Catholic Church. What will appear to many as a mere quibble about the "Kingship" and "Headship" of Christ does not justify Bultema's expulsion, and a continuation of such a policy will defeat all efforts for union. There must be liberty to work out theological problems on which Reformed Standards are practically silent, just as the Fathers evidently desired and expected their successors would do.

The writer claims that such of the following chapters as those on the knowledge the American Reformed Church had of conditions in Holland, and on the knowledge the "colonists" in 1849 and before had of the American Church, are really fundamental, although practically unknown today in the West. A better acquaintance all around will work miracles. Let us all understand, not misunderstand or misrepresent, the history of Dr. Van Raalte and his people in their relation to the Churches in Holland and the Reformed Churches in this country. If the writer has contributed something towards the possibility of a united religious life of the descendants of the immigrants of 1846 and later, he will feel rewarded for delving into one of the most disagreeable fields of our "colonial" history.

The writer was obliged to translate almost everything said about Churches in the Netherlands and the

Western Churches in America from the Dutch, and he makes no apology for the use of the words "secede" and "seceder." Nothing insidious was intended by them, but other exact English equivalents for "Afscheiding," etc., could not be found. It may be considered presumptious for a layman to attempt to lay down the law on "The Church of God," "The Local Church," and "The Police Rules of God's House," but these chapters are rather fundamental, and are based on recognized Reformed writers. The fact that information on these subjects was lacking in the works on the secession among the Hollanders in America, and that the writer was forced to extract the necessary information from European and Reformed Dutch authorities, is itself eloquent evidence of the dense and profound ignorance on these subjects among both Western laity and clergy. The lack of knowledge of the nature of the Church, of the limits and scope of Church Orders or Rules, of what is really Reformed doctrine and practice, and of the Christian liberties, is at the base of our ecclesiastical contentions. If these two denominations cease to vex one another with nonessentials, and, instead of hindering each other's work, should combine and cut expenses for each in two while doubling their good work, "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them."

IV. AS A LILY AMONG THORNS

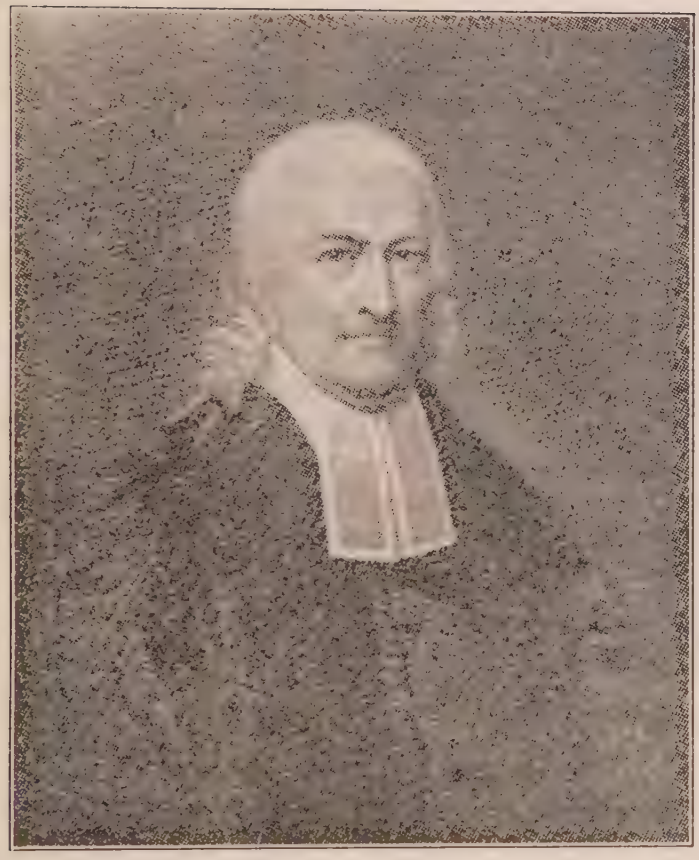
WHAT was this Reformed Dutch Church in America, when the Hollanders of 1847 arrived in the United States? Was she an orthodox church, in the sense of Dort? Or,—what is the real point,—was she a regular New Testament Christian Church fit as a refuge for the faithful in 1850?

This church was brought from old Holland by the settlers of New York and New Jersey, at the very time the religious atmosphere of Holland was cleared by the Synod of Dort. The Dutch Church in New York was definitely organized in 1619, and is therefore the oldest Protestant Church in North America. All the settlers held the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and, since 1619, the Canons of Dort, as the Forms of Concord of Reformed churches, and used the Rules of Dort in the government of their churches just as the churches in Holland did. They were in fact a part of the Church of the Fatherland, transplanted to New Netherlands, and were, with the German Reformed people in America, attached to the Synod of North Holland, and the Classis of Amsterdam. The Dutch West India Company, it seems, did not permit Arminians in New Netherlands, and this fact probably accounts for the utter absence of this controversy among the Reformed people in the East for almost two hundred years. All this time, from 1620 until 1780, the ministers of this Church were educated in the schools of Holland, and were familiar with the religious literature of the Netherlands.

In 1664, New Netherlands was stolen, in time of peace, by Charles II of England, and although recaptured in time of war by the Dutch, at the treaty of

peace it was exchanged for another colony in possession of Holland today. As a result of the transfer of New Netherlands to Great Britain, the Dutch churches were domineered by a handful of Episcopalians, backed by the British government; the wide Atlantic lay between them and Holland; several ministers were shipwrecked and drowned on the way to America; the supply of pastors was inadequate, and many churches were vacant for years. This off-shoot of the Church of the Netherlands struggled with such difficulties for over a century, till in about 1750, she split into two factions—the Coetus and Conferentie parties. The Coetus wanted a separate establishment, so as better to supply their needs, without waiting for the assistance from Holland. The Conferentie deemed the connection with the Church of Holland essential, and opposed sundering the ties with the Martyr Church.

Both parties, however, well knew the thrilling story of Holland's fight for liberty, and felt that the Church of Holland had literally come out of great tribulation. They cherished the story of Father William vowing to drown his country before giving it back to the Spaniards; they knew of Leyden siege, of Mooker Heath, of redhot tongs and thumbscrews of the Inquisition, of flayings and buryings alive, and of charred and blackened bodies of witnesses for Jesus lying in the market places of the cities of Holland and Belgium; of the sacks and sieges and the lines of blazing houses and villages red in the midnight skies; of Regnier Klaaszoon, the vice-admiral, in 1606, surrounded by a Spanish fleet, and, in the slanting rays of the setting sun, last seen fighting hard, and then blowing up his own ship and thundering to his enemies, with his last breath, that the laws of morality and Christianity bind states and hierarchs and autocrats, as well as the common people; of Prince Maurice of Nassau on his knees in prayer before the terrible battle of Nieuport; of William III, the Stadtholder (later King of England), deciding, when from the steeples of Amsterdam could be seen the campfires of



REV. J. H. LIVINGSTON, D.D.

the French invaders, and all seemed lost, to give his country back to the ocean, and to seek a home in the Indies,—an incident turned into glorious English by Macaulay, as he wrote that, "Liberty and pure religion, driven by tyrants and bigots from Europe, might take refuge in the farthest isles of Asia"; that "there the Dutch commonwealth might commence a new and more glorious existence, and might rear, under the Southern Cross, amidst the sugar canes and nutmeg trees, the Exchange of a wealthier Amsterdam, and the schools of a more learned Leyden." William did flood part of his country, so that steeples and ramparts "stuck out like islands," and so drove the invaders away. New Netherlands heard the stories of Heemskerk's and Piet Hein's victories, heard of Tromp's sweeping the ocean, and never wearied of telling of times like 1666 and 1672—dark years in the annals of freedom, when the young whelps of the Reformation doctrines of religious and civil liberty were at bay, roaring from their dikes and dunes and buckwheat fields, against kingcraft and priestcraft; when the fleets of Catholic France and Episcopal England combined to crush that Dutch hotbed of democracy, and when the thunders of De Ruyter's guns in fierce combat with the enemies came booming over the North Sea, and the people along the coast of North Holland flocked to their churches and prayed for De Ruyter's victory. And the Lord God of hosts was with them yet, for their prayer was answered. A few days later De Ruyter bombarded Chatham, broke the Thames chains, and, his guns roaring Londonward, brought the British to their senses.

What saves the recital of such deeds from the charge of vanity and idle boasting is the great underlying object for which the Eighty Years War was fought; and, it is no wonder that dear above all to the New Netherlanders was the freedom acquired in that great war by the forefathers, whose government had declared, "that all religions ought to be tolerated, and that restraint in matters of religion is as detestable as the inquisition itself," an edict that freed the Dutch

people from church hierarchies and from the mediation of priests between their souls and God, the very flower of the Reformation; and also assured them of their civil liberty, the flower, likewise, of the Eighty Years War. Once only in Holland, the government, fearing Barneveld's decentralizing policy of States rights, and as a political measure, banished the Remonstrants; but these were soon recalled. Once or twice only in New Netherlands, for a short time, as under Stuyvesant, the headstrong, were Quakers and others put under disabilities. But, as Holland, with its written constitution, its representative assemblies and public schools, all based on the authority of the people, was the asylum of the oppressed of Europe,—and this a hundred years ahead of the rest of Europe,—so New Netherlands, in this respect, naturally became almost an exact copy of the mother country. The Synod of Dort, too, had made it plain to them that the highest penalty for religious offenses was nought but simple severance from the church, so that the civil government could not punish for ecclesiastical offenses. The expression in the Netherlands or Belgic Confession about the duty of the civil government to root out idolatry and false worship (Art. 36), while not changed by the Synod of Dort, is sufficiently negatived by what the Rules of Dort say about this subject under the head of Discipline.

Whether considered from the aspect of civil or of religious liberty, there is, without doubt, no other people in the entire range of human history that has so much right to speak to mankind on these subjects as Holland has. The Eighty Years War is without a parallel; and it was just during that struggle that the Belgic Confession and the Rules of Church government were born, both as it were, the cry of agony of a suffering people, expressing their faith amidst funeral pyres and the ashes of martyrs for Christ. The Belgic Confession was born from the ranks, while the other creeds of those days were made by princes for the people. And it is not strange that the bulk of the

Reformed people in the East clung to their church, and to the language so identified with the palmy days of that church. They are sometimes represented as saying, "Let my right hand forget her cunning, and let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I forget thee O home of the Martyr Church." The language of that Church had become in their minds the vernacular of liberty.

This love for Holland, its language and church literature, the Confession, Canons and Church Orders, which were really considered bulwarks of both civil and religious liberty, was so strong, that in course of time it begat, in some places, too much reverence for the faith and customs of the fathers, rather than for the divine influence; for doctrines rather than for practice; for forms rather than for deep spiritual life; for formalism rather than for piety; for worldliness rather than for godliness. In all the other colonies there was a similar deterioration, especially in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. But about 1730, Rev. Frelinghuysen and others started a movement which fortunately resulted in the rejuvenation of those Reformed Churches. Moreover, the Coetus-Conferentie dispute was settled in 1771, and the language question in 1792; schools were established at six or seven places; the reaction against the demoralization caused by the Revolutionary War had set in; instruction in theology had been begun by Livingston, Romeyn and Fraeligh, and Queen's College (later Rutgers) had been founded. During the Revolution the Reformed people were almost all loyal against the British. Their churches were all in the war zone, and many of them were burnt down, as at Canajoharie, Ft. Plain, Stone Arabia and Raritan. In New York city the churches were the riding schools for British cavalry, while the Reformed clergymen were exiled, Livingston at Albany and Poughkeepsie, Laidlie at Red Hook, De Ronde at Schagticoke, and Ritzema at Kinderhook. All except Livingston died practically in exile. The Revolution threatened the overthrow of religion for a while,

but the Reformed Church recovered rather quickly, so that by 1830, she was one of the best ordered churches in the United States. In 1771 she became reunited, in 1792 independent from the Classis of Amsterdam, and in 1784 a theological seminary was started. The Confession, Catechism, Canons of Dort, and the Church Orders of Dort had been retained and re-adopted as the Constitution, without change, except as to the Erastian features, the "Jus Patronatus" and the like, all translated into English, with Explanatory Articles relative to American conditions added, so that the old Church of the Fathers of Dort was in 1792 fully equipped for her work in America, and stood four-square on the Standards established during the Eighty Years War.

The rigid adherence to the Dutch language cost the Reformed Churches many members. The younger people joined the Episcopal Church, mostly because the Presbyterian Church was at that time rather weak. One hundred fifty years ago or more it was not so plain that the English would prevail in the East, and Holland had at that time one of the largest colonial empires; and we can excuse people of Dutch descent for fearing the results of dropping the old language. But Dr. Phelps of Hope College said in 1866, that the Reformed people in the East did business in English, taught school in English, but for too long a time refused to do the Lord's business in English. Dr. Phelps was correct, and the church soon found foresight more valuable than "after-sight," and that, as Dr. Livingston, the main human factor in the union of 1771, is reported to have said, "We have a good charter from heaven, a good catechism from Holland, and the whole continent before us." The Church fell in with the manifest promptings of Providence, and, chiefly through the influence of her schools, made remarkable progress since 1771. These grammar schools, located at Flatbush, Hackensack, Kingston, Albany, Kinder-

hook, Schenectady, and other places, really made the Reformed Church, and were the feeders of Rutgers and Union Colleges, and of the Seminary.

In considering the origin of this Reformed Dutch Zion in America, two other elements must be emphasized. A Dutchman or a Scotchman must be caught young, or he will be a long time wrong; but when these two get together and form a church, hell trembles and the gates of hell do not prevail. From Scotland came people oppressed by Roman Catholics, and later by Episcopalians. Even Dr. Livingston's great-grandfather fled from Scotland to Holland. Fined, imprisoned, their churches disbanded, threatened with confiscation and death, came these Scotch Presbyterians, first to Holland and then to America, and many joined the Reformed Church.

From the fiery furnace of France, came the Huguenots from Bordeaux and Languedoc, their property and their children even stolen, and their pastors broken on the wheel. The most Christian (?) King of France threw dead heretics to the beasts, required recantation or torture, and roasted in slow fires, cast into pits, slashed with knives and tore with pincers, those who worshipped God according to the Word. These Huguenots fled to Holland, and thence to America, where they joined the Reformed Church. They were called men "with the virtues of the Puritans, but without their bigotry."

It is true that the Hollanders who settled New York and New Jersey were not refugees from oppression at home, nevertheless the memories of the horrors and sorrows, and of the complete victory of the Eighty Years War were strong upon them, and to this day are a source of just pride with their descendants. If one were to select men to found a Protestant church, it may be doubted whether either of the three above elements would be omitted. These Dutchmen, who received refugees from all Europe, the Jews included, were Dutchmen indeed; and those who settled in America were joined by Scots and Huguenots, driven, with

a faith tested and purified, direct from the depths of persecution to Holland, and later, in the New World, they together formed the American branch of the vineyard of Dort. "These are they which came out of great tribulation."

Such is the pedigree of the Reformed Dutch Church. And let us not forget that the main constituent parts of that Church came to America from the scenes of horrible sufferings, such as really made the Church of Holland a "Lily Among Thorns," and the part transplanted to America, with the refugees from the shambles of Scotland and France, a Lily plucked from the mouth of hell.

Even as America has become the melting-pot of European nations, so the Reformed Church of the East became the melting-pot of the most tried, the strongest elements of the Protestantism of western Europe, —the Hollander, Scotch Presbyterian, and the French Huguenot.

One of the profoundest students of the Reformed System was Rev. Geo. S. Bishop of the First Reformed Church of Orange, N. J. In 1884 he preached a sermon on Ps. 48:12, 13, "Walk about Zion," etc. It was a "Ten Years' Review" of his church, which had been organized April 18, 1875, in Lyric Hall, and was based on the Five Points of Calvinism. In his discourse Dr. Bishop, emphasizing the composite character of the American Reformed Church, says on p. 9, "The Dutch Church never was Dutch; its catechism was written by a Belgian (1562); its Liturgy was prepared by John a Lasko, a Pole, and retouched by John Calvin, a Frenchman; its Canons of Dort were drawn up by an Ecumenical Council of Protestant Europe, in which six English bishops took part; its first church edifice, because of persecution in the low countries, was Austin Friars, London, and its first Church service was on English soil. The Dutch Church in Europe never was Dutch, i. e., exclusively, as the English was English, and the Scotch Scotch. And the Dutch Church in this land has never been Dutch. To

begin with, she was half Huguenot. More than this, she was part Scotch." "But," continues Dr. Bishop, "the Dutch Church was the foster mother of the Puritans, who after twelve years residence under the eaves of Utrecht and Leyden, sailed from Delftshaven, men modified and moulded by that residence to carry from the Dutch the germs—would they had carried more of them—which went to constitute a stable, equable New England." Dr. Bishop also acknowledges fittingly the debt refugee Scots and Huguenots owed the Dutch Church in Holland, and speaks of "the conglomerate Reformed Church standing upon these shores for 300 years, strong, united, orthodox, and advancing between the bald sternness of Puritanism and the meritricious pretentions of Ritualism."

Although composed, with an admixture of excellent Swiss and Germans, of three main elements—Dutch, Scotch and Huguenot, these elements were filtered, as it were, through the Dutch Church in Holland, and together they gave the Reformed Dutch Church the power and strength which survived the terrible religious demoralization of a century or more ago. Without disparaging the Scotch and Huguenot constituents of the Reformed Church in America, and recognizing that Scotland and France are also Fatherlands of the American Reformed Church, it must be stated that the old church of the Netherlands was, until 1792, the official organization of the Eastern Reformed Church, and that her spirit governed the churches of New York and New Jersey.

The Reformed Church of Holland, while the power of religious despotism was being broken, was the foster mother of them all; and when disasters overpowered the body of this foster mother in old Holland, in this French-Scotch-Dutch Reformed Church, her soul goes marching on.

V. THE THUNDERS OF DORT

OF ALL the ecclesiastical bodies none has been so unmercifully criticized as the Synod of Dort, and no wonder, for President Bogerman declared after its adjournment, that its work had made "hell tremble." This synod, called by the States General, after years of opposition, met in the city of Dordrecht, Nov. 13, 1618, and adjourned May 29, 1619, after 180 sittings. There were delegates from the Reformed Churches of the Continent and also five from Great Britain. There were preachers, elders and professors. John Bogerman of Friesland was president, and Jacob Rolandus of Amsterdam and Herman Faukelius of Middelburg, were assessors, or assistant presidents. Sebastian Dammanus of Zutphen and Festus Hommius of Leyden were secretaries. Each member swore before God, before beginning the work, "that during the course of the proceedings of this synod, which will examine and decide, not only the five points and all the differences resulting from them, but also any other doctrine, I will use no human writing, but only the word of God, which is an infallible rule of faith." This was a remarkable, a sublime beginning.

The cause of this synod was the so-called Arminian troubles, which had shaken the churches of the Netherlands for years, and it was high time to assuage the storm. James Arminius, professor at Leyden, had been the spokesman of the Arminians. In these troubles, some ten years before the Synod met, these Arminians had raised havoc in the churches, and several of the molested churches temporarily went out of the organization. The Arminians were in 1610-11, the aggressors, and therefore deserve our sympathy the less.

The importance of the whole dispute centered round the questions of free grace and free will. The Arminians claimed God conferred on all men the benefits of Christ's death, and if some shared in it, it was because they applied by their free will the grace impartially offered. God foresees faith, repentance and sanctity. Grace is a "gentle suasion." Faith is an act of man, but God does not help effectually in the will of man until man himself moves. Original sin does not condemn the whole race. God elected those who by grace believe, and rejected the impenitent and unbelievers. Christ died for all, though none but believers are in the enjoyment of reconciliation and pardon. Man has not saving faith in himself, nor from his free-will, but needs the grace of God in Christ. Grace is man's salvation, and none can believe without it; good works are ascribed to grace, but grace is not irresistible. True believers can stray from God, that is, slide back.

The other party, the Gomarists, or orthodox party, on the other hand, held that God had elected some and rejected others, without regard to foreseen faith; God gives the elect faith, perseverance and salvation. Christ's suffering was sufficient for the whole world, but redemption is for the elect only. God, through preaching, quickens by the Holy Spirit, so that man receives power to repent and believe. Perseverance of saints,—that Christ never lets those really converted slide back,—was emphasized.

It is plain that the crux of the whole dispute was absolute predestination or free-will. The Remonstrants, or Arminians, made salvation turn on the acceptance of the offer by man, that is, made the election conditional on man's free will. This emphasized the action of man. The Contra-Remonstrants, or orthodox party, emphasized the sovereignty of God and the reign of God's free grace in the conversion of man. God as the omnipotent Father grants faith to the elect. Faith therefore is the free gift of God, and man is prone to all evil, and cannot believe except through grace—the gift of God. All Arminians and all Gomar-

ists did not go the same lengths, but it is evident that the orthodox party feared the doctrines of the Arminians not nearly so much, as they feared the logical deductions others would make from these doctrines.

No doubt it is true, that this vilified and maligned Synod of Dort recalled the Reformed Churches of Europe, which had been and were to be the great bulwarks of civil and religious liberty for a long time, back from the road to religious revolution and anarchy, into the old paths of liberty under the unchangeable and fixed standards of God's own Word. The Synod of Dort tried to enthrone the Almighty and his grace, and to prevent the reign of finite human reason in a Universe man cannot comprehend, and tried to establish the absolute supremacy of the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and life to which human reason had to conform. Not a reference to Calvin or Calvinism is found in the proceedings of this Synod that had sworn to use no human writings. It did not insist on unconditional predestination because it wanted to, but because the Bible clearly teaches it. No doubt the Synod was right, and the Church of God will find sooner or later, when the human "age of reason" has thrown the churches into confusion and worldliness, that she will have to return to the principles of the Fathers of Dort for stability and life. Not that these Fathers knew it all, or spoke the last words on all theological questions, but they worked out thoroughly and therefore possibly too emphatically like Augustine before them, the Five Points of Calvinism, which were the burning questions of the day.

Did they reconcile predestination and free will? How could they? Prof. Miller of Princeton, in his introduction to Scott's History of the Synod of Dort, p. 66, says, "How to reconcile what the Scriptures plainly reveal, on the one hand, concerning the entire dependence of man; and, on the other, concerning his activity and responsibility; how to explain the perfect foreknowledge and predestination of God, in consistency with the perfect freedom and moral agency of his in-

telligent creatures, is a problem which no thinking man expects fully to solve." And Prof. Miller further says that Arminians and Pelagians both grant that all men will not actually be saved; that the salvation or perdition of each individual is distinctly foreknown by God, and will surely therefore happen. The Arminians, therefore, do not get rid of one particle of the difficulties in Calvinism, but they only place the difficulty one step farther back, and must meet it in its full strength after all. "If there be a God who is endowed with perfect foreknowledge," Prof. Miller continues, "and, who is, and always has been acting upon a plan, of which he knows the end from the beginning—and there is such a Being, or there is no God,—than all the difficulty which lies against the doctrine of sovereign, unconditional predestination, lies equally and in all its unmitigated force, against the doctrine of foreknowledge and certain futurition. Hence the Arminian scheme settled nothing at all." The Synod of Dort followed, however, the line of St. Paul's arguments, and placed herself squarely on the Scripture, regardless of human reasonings.

Pelagianism, in all its forms, denied the lost condition of man and the necessity of salvation and sanctification; but many texts like Matt. 26:24, Phil. 3:9, and 2 Thess. 1:9, show that all will not be saved, and certainly the whole basis of Christianity, as revealed in the New Testament, is original sin and the lost condition of man, the grace of God in Christ, and Christ the only salvation. Many argue, with Dr. Howard Crosby, that God's sovereignty does not make man a mere machine, that we do, in no way, detract from the sovereignty and grace of God in salvation, when we affirm the existence of free will, because free will is also the gift of God. It must be admitted that the responsibility of man for accepting or rejecting God's grace, is plainly revealed in the Scriptures, and many conclude that God willed the system of holiness and righteousness in which man's will has independent play, and that man wills his personal destiny under the

system. The Synod of Dort also said, Canons, Head 4, Art. 16, that God "does not treat men as senseless stocks or blocks, nor takes away their will and its properties; neither does violence thereto." And Westminster, twenty-five years later, "said the same thing." But God, with whom such bagatelles as time or duration do not interfere, has given each one of us a fragment of duration which we call time; and God certainly knows the beginning and end of these fragments. He needs no foreknowledge, and this term was invented merely to suit our finite existence here. If God grants free will to man, and if he knows the result of our lives in advance,—as he must, or he is not God,—we have what is called "certain futurition." God, then, knowing the end of each mortal, does not prevent the loss of some, for permitting is also willing; and so we find ourselves back to the original position—the sovereignty of the Almighty, and, the problem, as Prof. Miller intimated, remains as complex as ever.

The Synod of Dort revised the Belgic Confession, which as a body representing all Reformed Churches in Europe, it could do; but its crowning work was The Five Points or Canons of Dort. When the foreign delegates had withdrawn, the Dutch delegates as a National Synod revised the Rules of Government for the Netherlands churches. But it is the Canons of Dort which have drawn to this Synod the lightnings of condemnation from all sides. The Synod took texts like Romans 9:18, "God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," and like Paul answered the objection, "Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?", not with reams of paper and ponderous arguments, but with Paul's words, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?", exactly as every Calvinist should answer. Human reason cannot comprehend the universe anyway, and God left us His Word, in which He told us what was necessary to know for salvation, but left many things unexplained. The Bible either is, or is not God's Word; if it is God's Word, we must take it

as supreme, whether our reason assents to all it says, or not. God does the talking, and the only thing the Synod of Dort did was to ascertain what God said, not what human reason dictated. And therefore the Synod used such strong expressions as "not by inquisitively prying into the deep and secret things of God," and "without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the most high" (Canons First Head, Arts. 12 and 14) ; showing that we cannot understand or harmonize predestination and free will, but must rely on the Scriptures, and take God at His Word. Dort did not invent, and Dort did not discover; Dort simply stated and re-stated correct Reformed doctrine.

But the Synod did not ignore the parts of God's Word which tell us what to do, or what God will do for us. Unable to make satisfaction for ourselves, Christ did it; the promise of the Gospel is that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life; this promise and the command to repent and believe must be published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction; there remain, since the fall, glimmerings of natural light, but what neither the light of nature, nor the law could do, God performs through the word or ministry of reconciliation; that in the case of those who, called by the ministry of the Word refuse to come, the fault lies with themselves, but that some come must be ascribed not to exercise of free will, but wholly to God; that the grace of God does not treat men as senseless stocks or blocks, nor takes away their will, neither does violence thereto; man by the fall did not lose his human nature, his understanding and will; but God spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and powerfully and sweetly bends; that the work of the Holy Spirit does not exclude or subvert the use of the Gospel, the seed of regeneration, and the food of the soul; that God will never forsake the believer, but that the believer will persevere to the end.

These Canons of Dort are probably the most remarkable document ever produced by a synod. The

first paragraph has man under the curse and obnoxious to eternal death, in ten lines; but the reverend fathers could, as it were, hold their horses no longer, and they break out, "But in this the love of God is manifested, that He sent His only begotten son into the world, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings, to whom he will, and at what time he pleases; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. Rom. 10:14, 15 says: 'How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?' "

Although grace reigns supreme, according to the Canons, and election is a fact, Art. 12 says the elect can know in their hearts that they are elected. "The elect in due time, though in various degrees and in different measures, attain the assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election, not by inquisitively prying into the secret and deep things of God; but by observing in themselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the word of God—such as a true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting for righteousness, etc." So that the Scriptures must be consulted, and preachers heard, and the means of grace utilized, before we can expect to observe in ourselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Scriptures.

But enough. The Synod said predestination is scriptural, and God's grace is the important factor in salvation, but predestination cannot be understood by finite minds; therefore to the law and the testimony. Art. 5, Second Head, Canons, says that the promise of the Gospel, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life, with

the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously, and without distinction. This means that the Word must be preached at all times, and the Word says, "He hath chosen us (not because we were, but) that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." God will take care of election, but men, who cannot understand election, must take the Scriptures as the rule of faith and life. He must live a holy life, which means an active life of good deeds, for he is an accountable and responsible being.

In the Conclusion of the Five Points, the Synod of Dort refers to the slander of the doctrine of predestination of the Reformed churches, such as that it is an opiate administered by the flesh and the devil, drawing minds away from all piety and religion, makes God the author of sin, makes people carnally secure, since nothing can hinder the salvation of the elect, and the works of saints cannot aid the reprobate, "and many other things of the same kind, which the Reformed churches not only do not acknowledge, but even detest with their whole soul. Wherefore, this Synod of Dort, in the name of the Lord, conjures as many as piously call upon the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, to judge the faith of the Reformed Churches, not from the calumnies which, on every side, are heaped upon it; nor from the private expressions of a few ancient and modern teachers, often dishonestly quoted, or corrupted, and wrested to a meaning quite foreign to their intention; but from the public confession of the churches themselves, and from this declaration of orthodox doctrine, confirmed by the unanimous consent of all and each of the members of the whole Synod. Moreover, the Synod warns calumniators themselves, to consider the terrible judgment of God which awaits them, for bearing false witness against the confessions of so many churches, for distressing the consciences of the weak, and for laboring to render suspected the society of the truly faithful."

The Synod of Dort stumbled and stammered when

it endeavored to speak the language William of Orange used forty years before. Father William was so far ahead of his time in toleration that we today are hardly able to approach him. Like Calvin and Beza before, and Maresius and Voetius later, Dort made the mistake of being willing to receive the assistance of the magistrate "to prevent and extirpate all idolatry and false worship," and Dort, therefore, cannot escape partial responsibility for the disgraceful record of the execution of Barneveld and of the persecution of the Remonstrants. But barring this one error, Dort was even ahead of the enlightened Dutch government of those days. Dort pleaded with Their High Mightinesses, the Lords States General, for the abolition of the "Jus Patronatus," and every remaining vestige of state control. Dort was probably the most intensely democratic institution of the ages. With the representatives of the Reformed Churches of the Continent and of the Episcopal Church of Britain, declaring before God and man almost the pure essence of democracy, in the midst of a king-ridden and priest-ridden world, Dort was sublime. It brought, in religious spheres, kings and emperors down to the level of humanity, and it exalted the individual into the ranks of royalty. It tried to make all the Lord's freemen. Dort repeated, with the preceding synods of the Eighty Years War, in the second article of the Confession, "We know Him (God) by two means; first by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, which is before our eyes as a most elegant book." . . . Secondly, he makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by his holy and divine word; that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to his glory and to our salvation." Dort, therefore, held the Scriptures as the only textbook of salvation, and far from ignoring science, lauded the study of the sciences as the first source of our knowledge of the Creator. Dort knew that all scientific investigation is simply the feeble efforts of man "to think God's thoughts after him," and that science can, therefore, never contradict

the revealed Word. But with all this scientific peering into "this most elegant book," and with all this humanity of kings, and royalty of the comman man, Dort saw with unerring vision the absolute Sovereignty of the Almighty, brought forth the royal diadem, and crowned Him Lord of all.

That gross calumnies were heaped upon the Synod of Dort by the religious public all over the world is well known. Even the venerable Dr. Thos. Scott had all his life, circulated gross misrepresentations of the Synod and its decisions, especially in his "Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism," so that in 1818, after having discovered his mistakes, he, "to counteract that misrepresentation, and to vindicate the Synod from atrocious calumnies, with which it had been wilfully and inadvertently traduced," wrote his "Synod of Dort." He found that the Calvinistic doctrine could "be so stated and explained, as to coincide with the strictest practical views of our holy religion, and to encourage and promote genuine holiness," p. 30. Dr. Scott intimates that only those who think that predestination alone figures in the Canons of Dort, can so traduce the work of the Synod, but that if the Canons are studied, and the real importance the Synod assigned to a holy and active Christian life is observed, it becomes plain that nowhere else is there such an insistence upon man's responsibilities and his duty to see that his faith worketh through love.

The claim that the British delegates were dissatisfied with the decisions of the Synod is also untenable, for these delegates later on issued a joint statement to the effect that The Five Points were "not only warrantable by the Holy Scriptures, but were conformable to the received doctrine of the English Church, which we are ready to maintain and justify against all gainsayers." The decisions had been unanimous, and Bishop Hall said, when he retired on account of illness, "There was no place on earth so like heaven, as the Synod of Dort, and where he should be more willing to dwell."

The Presbyterians sometimes refer to the thunders of Dort, and to the lurid lightnings of the venerable "grim" Synod of Dort; but the fact is that the precision and exactness of the Westminster Assembly led to many difficulties avoided by the safer general terms of the Standards of Dort. For example, Dr. Mitchell in his lectures on the Westminster Assembly says, that in spite of the assertion that those who hold predestination, as set forth in the Westminster standards, cannot preach to their fellow sinner the love of God (to men in general) and the freeness of Christ's salvation, all, nevertheless, have done so, and then Dr. Mitchell appeals to many articles in the Canons of the grim Synod of Dort (not to Westminster), to vindicate the consistency of Westminster divines and their followers in preaching the love of God to all and in presenting the offer of salvation to all. Further, Westminster spoke of "elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated," etc. Dort does not thus cut off all other infants, but directly comforts parents with the assurance of the covenant relation, and leaves other infants in the hands of a merciful God. Westminster, Chap. 10, Sec. 4, is also too severe in affirming the impossibility of the salvation of any one not professing the Christian religion, while Dort does not pass on the subject. Westminster calls the pope "Anti-Christ—that man of sin and son of perdition," Chap. 25, Sec. 6, while Dort has nothing of the kind; only the Heidelberg Catechism has an interpellation about the papal mass by the Elector Frederick (not by the authors). Dort, too, is not as severe as Westminster on good works without faith. "In all these articles (of the Canons of Dort) we find no classification of men into elect and non-elect, but into voluntary acceptors and rejectors of a gracious provision, which is sufficient and suitable for all sinners, and which is sincerely offered to those who hear the good tidings." On the other hand, Dr. Schaff says, "The great, we may say, the only serious objection to the Westminster Confession is the overstatement of divine sovereignty at

the expense, if not the exclusion of human responsibility, and the over-statement of the doctrine of particular or partial election to the exclusion of the general love of God to all His creatures. This last is nowhere mentioned. It is a confession for the exclusive benefit of the elect. To this small circle all is bright and hopeful, but outside of it all is dark as midnight."

The last few quotations, beginning with that of Dr. Mitchell, are from Dr. D. D. Demarest's excellent little work *Dort* and *Westminster*, where the subject is worked out more fully.

What cause for these harsh criticisms of the Fathers of Dort therefore remains? And yet it must be admitted that even among the Hollanders of the West, there is so much misapprehension and misconception on this subject, that a sound conception of unity of doctrines, of Christian works, and, consequently, of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and of the real science of Church life, is impossible. One party will always claim that the Calvinistic Churches killed the spirit of missions, while the other assert that philanthropic and missionary enterprise destroy the force of doctrines, by emphasizing the human element. Both assertions are wrong. Even the old Churches of Dort sent 312 missionaries to the East Indies before the year 1723, translated the Scriptures into the Malay languages, and had large religious establishments in all the colonies. After 1816, it is true, that church became partly a State Machine, and reflected the colorless rationalistic State religion, but the strongest Calvinistic Church in America eighty years ago—the Reformed Dutch—was the greatest Mission Church in the country, and the air of the Mohawk, Hudson, and Raritan regions was laden with the aroma of missionary zeal. There is nothing in the claim that Calvinism is, in its principles opposed to missions, but it can be claimed that the duty of gathering out of all peoples the elect of God into the Church,—the Calvinistic idea — is the very root of missionary enterprise.

The Reformed doctrine on Missions was clearly

laid down by Rev. R. Pieters of Drenthe, Mich., in a powerful sermon before the Holland Classis in 1863. Pieters had been a student of Van Vleck at Holland Academy, and of Profs. Van Vranken, Campbell, and Woodbridge at New Brunswick, and he was in his day probably the profoundest student of doctrines in the Western Church. This sermon was printed and circulated all over the West, and created a deep and lasting impression. The ruling thoughts were: The doctrine of election gives security in God; the object of election gives the Church the destiny or duty of gathering the elect into her holy bosom. The doctrine of our lost condition and total inability clothes us with humility, and fills our hearts with pity for our fellow men. The doctrines of free grace and the perseverance of saints make us thankful, give every convert the seal of the Spirit, and make the entire Church the possession of God. Paul, ever talking about election, was the greatest missionary of all time—"for I have much people in that city" and in the world. Paul set the pace for the whole Christian Church. God had chosen the Church to be active in gathering to herself the elect from among the nations, and with the world lost in depravity and inability, the sound heartbeat of the Reformed Church was to be found only in strong efforts to gather into the fold "such as should be saved." Rev. Pieters' plain intimation is that, in so far as the salvation of the heathen world may be dependent upon the efforts of the Church to gather them in, we as a part of the Church would not be able to escape our responsibility unless we do our utmost in speeding the good tidings of great joy. For, he says, "the Reformed Church cannot stand before God, with her Confession and the heathen world to be measured with heaven's yardstick, unless she be a standard-bearer in the cause of Missions."

Such a standard-bearer the Reformed Dutch Church had been since 1836, as Rev. Pieters knew full well; but the churches of 1822 in the East and of the seceders in the West since 1857, have been conspicuous by their

absence from the Foreign Mission fields; and not content with that, have leveled their guns on the only Reformed body of Holland descent which tried to be a standard-bearer "on the dark shores of heathenism."

However, if there ever was an ecclesiastical body that believed in the value and indispensability of creeds, it was the Reformed Dutch Church. The literature of that Church, especially during the period from 1800 to 1850, is so packed with references to the subject that there is no escape from the conclusion Dr. Schaff came to, that she was too rigid on creeds and doctrines. Of course, extremes are to be avoided where possible; but the common expressions of contempt of creeds are an evidence of pure ignorance. A church without a creed is like a skyscraper without steel, a human body without bones, a sort of jellyfish without spine. All these creeds are expressions of what the various Christian churches understand the Bible really says about the truth; they are intended to give the logic of the Bible. Without expression of Christian principles in logical connection, the truths of the Bible might become a rope of sand; but with clear and logical expression in creeds the golden thread which really connects religious truth is more easily traced and observed, and the fact that "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform" is more easily grasped.

While the Reformed Dutch Church was powerful in creeds and insistent in doctrine, no one can accuse her of being bones without a body, or steel without a skyscraper. The secession churches in 1822 and of 1857 criticized her for her neglect of doctrine; but these secession churches were so strong on certain doctrines that they lacked the spirit of Christianity. The one has practically disappeared, while the other has reversed herself often, and has recently even declared, after a prolonged battle, for foreign missions. This and similar acts attest the correctness of the position of the Reformed Dutch Church of 1850; and, gradually the Western Seceder Church is throwing down bar after bar, so that the existence of that Seces-

sion Church as a separate denomination is daily becoming more and more unnecessary, even according to her own acts.

The Reformed Church believed, as Rev. Romeyn in his "Crisis," p. 17, expressed it, that "the Gospel is not only an offer, but a command. 'This is the will of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'" And if the Gospel is a command, it is important that the world be notified of it by the greatest missionary works.

In concluding these remarks on the great Synod of Dort, which, as Pres. Bogerman said, had "made hell tremble," but which we can justly say also made others, not in hell, tremble, it should be noticed that the Episcopalians of England were present at the Synod, and that the conduct of the Dutch delegates towards them shows that the Fathers of Dort were not nearly as exclusive as often represented. The Reformed Dutch Church in America, it is true, under the greatest provocation from the attack of Unitarianism early in the 19th century, was rather exclusive, and Rev. Paulison tells us, in his first pamphlet, that he prepared and delivered a sermon three and a half hours long, in 1829, against the Methodists. Paulison was an extremist, it is true, but the sentiment of the Reformed Church of that day was rather severe against the Methodists. Still, the church as a whole knew little of a bigotry like that of the seceders of 1857 in Michigan, by whom every church except their own was condemned, and for whom the Fathers of Dort were not orthodox enough. The learned Dr. Kuyper of Holland is justly given credit for having in recent years recalled the attention of the religious world to the greatness of Calvinism; but there is in his writings nothing of the high-handed condemnation of other denominations which disgraced the secession of 1834 in Holland, and the secession of 1857 in Michigan. Kuyper found it necessary to go back to Dort, to Calvin, and the Bible. On p. 14 of his *Calvinisme en Revisie,* he says that the Christian religion is too rich, too many-sided, and too comprehensive, to permit

its divine fulness to flow through one bed, and it chooses therefore several beds or channels; and it follows from this that the child of God may stand in the conviction that the bed he moves in is relatively the purest, but without pretension to make it absolute in such a way as to cut off the other channels as not belonging to the stream. On p. 19, Kuyper praises the Methodist and his saving of the sinner, the Baptist and his mystery of the new birth, the Lutheran and his justification by faith, and the Roman Catholic and his catholicity of the Church.

On p. 21, Kuyper says that one who presumes that predestination is the main feature of Calvinism is mistaken; it is only a consequence of the main feature—the absolute sovereignty of God. Because Calvinism wanted to leave God *God,* and could not see good in the will and work of man, without the support of God's will and work, it confesses predestination; and because it wanted to leave God *God,* when he spoke, it confessed the authority of the Scriptures," and so on.

Dr. Kuyper, on p. 23, says, Calvinism did not place predestination in the foreground, and thus give a blank warrant to Antinomianism. She placed herself before God, to let the light shine from his word on what she had to confess, and on the path she had to tread. "In Calvinistic countries passive circles and Antinomian sects arose, but the power of true Calvinism slung from her arms these two excrescences as if they were poisonous snakes."

Upon a careful survey of Dr. Kuyper's works, there is nothing in them that was not known by the Reformed Dutch Church before 1850. The literature of that Church shows that her resort to the Fathers of Dort led her to the same conclusions the learned Dr. Kuyper came to. In fact the Reformed Dutch Church drew her information from the Fathers of the Church of Dort, and was mercifully saved from the contagion of 1796-1815 which ruined the old church of Holland, and from the wild disorganization and demoralization of the seceders of 1834, who vociferated their appeals to the

Fathers of Dort, but in their ignorance and anger tore the doctrines and practices of those Fathers to shreds. This difference between the source of theology of the Reformed Dutch Church (the Fathers of Dort), and that of the Seceders in Michigan in 1857 (some of the Fathers of 1834), holds in its bosom the cause of secession in America in 1857.

The seceders of 1822 blamed the Reformed Dutch Church, and the seceders of 1857 did likewise,—for doing what is really a great credit to her—for slinging from her arms the over-emphasis on Predestination and the Antinomian heresies of Dr. Fraeligh and his Church, as if they were poisonous snakes, and for drinking out of the fountains of Dort instead of from the mixed, and as yet impure, waters of 1834.

There is nothing great in the distinctive features of Scotch, French and Dutch Calvinism which the Ref. Dutch Church did not know in 1850, and the glorious ravings of Bancroft and Neal ninety years ago about the greatness of Calvinism had for years been a familiar sound in the "Reformed Dutch Zion" of the Hudson and Raritan valleys.

VI. "COR ECCLESIAE"

TO THE Reformed, or the Calvinist, there is no such thing as time with the Almighty. All time, while either past, present or future to man, is with the Lord, an eternal *present*, an everlasting *now*. Even Calvin, speaking of foreknowledge, says, Institutes, Book III, p. 145, "When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things have ever been, and perpetually remain, before His eyes, so that to His knowledge nothing is future or past, but all things are present; and present in such a manner, that He does not merely conceive of them from ideas formed in His mind, but really beholds and sees them, as if actually placed before Him." To such a God predestination is no problem at all.

The Reformed Church believes that all humanity is in ruins as a result of the fall and that if one man were saved, it would be one more than what humanity deserves;—a world of moil and toil, thorns and thistles; horrors of war; animals at enmity; tears and sorrow; and in a few years the grave,—a world every note of whose threnody is written in the minor key. And from this fallen world, whose knowledge of the Infinite and His creation is nothing but "glimmerings" of knowledge, God by pure grace elects some,—how many no man knows. This election is evident from the Scriptures, not from human reason, and neither Calvin nor the Synod of Dort therefore crucified the love of God on a cross of logic. They took the Bible as sole authority. Hence, while admitting the doctrine of election, they warn against the idea of trying to understand it. Calvin in his Institutes does not feature the doctrine of predestination as the paramount doctrine.

He treats it in a few short chapters, as one of the truths of religion found in the Bible. The Institutes is a running commentary on the Apostles Creed, and a manual of evangelical truth, not an exposition of predestination.

Calvin says that in the discussion of this subject much perplexity is caused by human curiosity, which wanders into forbidden labyrinths, and wants to explore Divine secrets, although the doctrine should be preached with great sobriety and moderation, as part of the truth, revealed for a purpose. On p. 167, Vol. II of the Institutes, he says Divine justice is too high to be measured by human standards, or to be understood by the littleness of the human mind, which, failing to find a reason, takes recourse to censure. God does not accommodate the greatness of all His works to the ignorance of man, as though they were necessarily wrong because concealed from carnal view, p. 168. "Whenever you hear the glory of God mentioned, think of His justice," even in predestination. "What deserves praise must be just." "Man falls by appointment of God, but falls by his own guilt." "Ignorance of things not possible or lawful to know, is to be learned." God offers His mercy to all who desire and seek it, which none do but those whom He has enlightened, and He enlightens all whom He has predestined to salvation, p. 197. Augustine is quoted as saying, "It is acting a most perverse part, to set up the measure of human justice as the standards by which to measure the justice of God." So it is with predestination.

Calvin, also, builds on such texts as "God hath not called us to uncleanness," and "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them." His whole theory is that man is so finite and God so infinite, that man is totally ignorant and unable. Man is but just opening his eyes to the vastness of God's greatness and goodness, when his eyes close again in death. God elects from the ruins of the fall some, in

His incomprehensible justness, by His free grace, not to be unclean, but unto good works ordained by God to walk in them.

But the Scriptures tell us to seek and we shall find, and knock and it shall be opened. All are not saved; but men are commanded to make their calling and election sure; and this does not call for sloth and security, but action and work. Shall not a man in danger of being lost, do his utmost to make sure of his own safety? And the only way is Christ crucified. The Bible shows the way,—go to church, read the Bible, and soon *seeking* faith becomes *assured* faith, through the Spirit. Conviction of sin and deliverance makes the sinner humble and thankful. If he is elected out of a fallen race, by God's free grace, he pleads not his own merits. But to have the assurance of election, a Christian's life and works are accurately prescribed in the Scriptures. When the signs of faith, hope and love are present in our lives, the Spirit has given us such assurance. The act of believing in itself, good works, and holiness are not the cause of election, but are, on the contrary, the results and fruits of election, and, therefore, the evidence of election, while all are the gifts of God.

The Calvinistic system leaves, of course, no room for the mediation of priests between God and man. Man is dealt with directly, and hence this importance of the individual does not allow rulers and governments any more control over a man than is necessary. Hence the moral law must be the rule of life for peoples as well as for persons, and so the civil rights of individuals are to be respected. For this reason the fierce fights by William the Silent, Calvin, Knox and Cromwell were based on Calvinistic principles. Historians, inclined at first view to consider Calvinism harsh, unreasonable, and fatal to morality, are astonished, upon fuller investigation, to find that it has produced the finest results in the history of liberty. And the reason is that the individual under Calvinistic doctrine is considered as good as a king or emperor.

Jefferson voiced the doctrine that all powers given by God to man are lodged in the people, and that governments have only such powers, and none other, as are conferred by the people. All other powers are reserved to the people; in fact people can delegate such powers only as are necessary to conserve the largest individual liberties consistent with the general good. Calvinism centuries ago applied the same principles in the religious world, and as a result almost succeeded in anticipating the work of Jefferson in political affairs.

However, this doctrine of election is often magnified out of all proportion, so that sinful life is forgotten. Some people rely on election, and do not care how they live. Such are called Antinomians, that is, the moral law does not apply to them, for they were elected anyway. This stretching of the doctrine so far was really the error of Dr. Fraeligh and the Seceders of 1822, and also of some of the later Seceders in Michigan in 1857. Instead of making their calling and election sure by holiness in life and acts, humanly speaking, they are liable to become mere dead orthodox timber in the Church. This magnifying election into an excuse for inactivity is heresy of the worst kind. And since there is so much misconception on this point, something must be said to explain the proper relation of the doctrine.

It is good Reformed doctrine that, in the first instance, the question of election should not be raised at all. No man has any reason to think that he is not elected. The chief of sinners can be saved. The Bible message is "Come" and "believe," and soon God's Spirit will grant assurance even of election. The doctrine of election is not intended as a revelation to the unconverted, but is, as it were, God's cipher-dispatch to those who have already some assurance of saintship.

Groen Van Prinsterer in the Netherlands, for example, was often accused of sacrificing what is called by many, rather inaccurately, *"Cor Ecclesiae"* (the heart of the Church), the doctrine of election, in his

many brochures against the government-made church rules. But he replied that when an outlaw was trying to force him out of his house, his neighbors when they came to his assistance, did not first spend a few days to investigate his title, but at once attacked the outlaw. In other words, we must endeavor to get into and remain in our house, and rely on our title in the abstract or register's office. Van Prinsterer's inference, at the time, was plain; it meant really Christian work and endeavor, leaving the title—election—to God; use our house, and do good with it, and not talk about the title all the time. As the use of property is evidence or assurance of good title, so good works, etc., are evidence or assurance of election.

And coming nearer home, let us see how the Reformed Dutch Church explains the question. The Classis of New Brunswick, in the General Synod of 1834, took Prof. Alexander McClelland of the N. B. Seminary to task, for his throwing the responsibility upon sinners, and not on God, in his printed sermon on Spiritual Renovation. Seventeen pages of the minutes are devoted to the question, and it is strange that the ecclesiastical scavengers among the western Hollanders failed to discover this choice morsel. The Synod criticized the sermon, but Prof. McClelland made an interesting explanatory statement, which showed unequivocal approbation of the Church Standards, and in which he said, "I believe that God has made such a gracious provision for sinful men, that a solid foundation is laid for a free offer of salvation to all indiscriminately, and for asserting that every sinner is the cause of his own destruction. I believe that, though unable to restore the image of God in his soul, he cannot plead his inability as an excuse for continuing in impenitence. There are external and internal aids put within his reach, viz., the word of truth, the common operation of the Holy Spirit, and the mercy seat, in the diligent, honest and unwearied use of which he may expect to receive higher assurance; or, as our Confession expresses it, "richer grace," with the same cer-

tainty that the labors of the diligent in common life are crowned with blessing (p. 316). * * * So that the simple and precise reason why the offer of salvation meets with such a different reception from men, is the solution given by the apostle—the election hath obtained it, the rest are blinded (p. 316). * * * The foundation of the moral obligation which I must press upon my unregenerated hearer, when I tell him to repent and believe the Gospel, is the consideration of God in His rectoral or moral capacity only. With the secret purposes of the Holy One, and the mysterious agencies He employes in accomplishing them, I have no concern. Whether a sinner within reach of the preacher's voice be elect or non-elect, is a question that should never cross his imagination. So sure as he parleys with it a single moment, it will cast its dark shadows over him in his ministerial work. 'Secret things belong unto the Lord, but the things which are revealed belong to us and our children, that we may do them.' The 'things that are revealed' are the great principles of the Gospel as a gracious provision for sinful men. They are the doctrines of an all sufficient Savior, a sanctifying Spirit, and a glorious immortality. Means and helps of every kind suited to a rational nature are supplied, and an unqualified intimation is given, that 'if we seek, we shall find, if we knock, it shall be opened'."

The professor also refers to sideglances by preachers and hearers into the deep and unfathomless abyss of the natural government of God as little less than a gross absurdity, and finds no sermon constructed on such principles in the Word of God. "Moses told the children of Israel to go up and possess the land, though they were destined, with few exceptions, to fall in the wilderness, and Jesus preached to His murderers, though He knew that for this end He came into the world, that He might perish by their hands. Election I believe not only to be true, but a godly and edifying doctrine. It must be exhibited, however, in its proper connections—resembling those patent medicines which

injudiciously administered, *kill* instead of *cure*." The professor says he omitted reference to election in his sermon purposely, for he wanted to press upon the sinner his privileges and responsibilities, without awakening new objections in his mind.

"Such prudence and circumspection," the professor continued, "I find prescribed to me in the admirable canon of our church on Divine Predestination—as the doctrine of election is clearly revealed in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament, so it is still to be published, *in due time and place,* in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed; provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of *discretion* and piety, for the glory of God's most holy name, and for enlivening and comforting His people, without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High."

The General Synod and the Classis of New Brunswick accepted Prof. McClelland's platform, and bowed in submission to his lucid statement of a perplexing and ever recurring problem.

During the years 1856-58, The Reformed Dutch Church published many little books on "Discipline," "Ruling Elders," etc. Book No. 2 contains a short history of the Synod of Dort, and the Canons of Dort, with the "Rejection of Errors" by that Synod. Bound in with the little volume is much matter on the sovereignty of God, and also No. 27, the terrific sermon, delivered in Scotland a few centuries ago, by Rev. Durham on "Christ stricken for His People." The Synod of Dort or the Westminster Assembly could not have improved on the orthodoxy of these little books. Rev. Durham's sermon contains all the arguments for and against predestination, and he shows the awful importance of the doctrine, as the Synod of Dort did; but in the conclusion he comes to the following resume: "Some object that they do not know whether Christ died for them, or whether they are elected. And so the doubt will stick still, if folks will thus break in upon God's secret will and purpose, which belongs not

to them. Christ's death for you is not the formal ground nor warrant of your faith, nor yet of the offer of the Gospel, but the Lord's will warranting you to believe, and calling for it from you, and His commanding you to rest upon Christ for the attaining of righteousness, as he is offered in the Gospel. We are invited by His command and promise, and we are not first called to believe that Christ died for us, but we are first called to believe in Him that is offered to us in the Gospel—that is our duty. And men are not condemned because Christ died not for them, but because, when He offered the benefit of His death and sufferings to them, they slighted and rejected it. We are to look first to what Christ calleth to, and not to meddle with the other, to-wit, whom Christ minded in His death, till we have done the first. The Word bids all believe that they may be saved, and such as neglect this command will be found disobedient. Though Christ hath not died for all, yet all that flee unto Him by faith shall be partakers of His death, *and from this ye should reason, and not from His intention in dying.* If ye come not to Him, ye cannot have ground to think He died for you, but if ye go to Him by faith, ye may expect that He will pray for you, and own you for believers," p. 22. On p. 32, Rev. Durham says, "If Christ died only for the elect, all should be more diligent, and each should aim in God's way to have it made sure to himself that Christ died for him, and should be more watchful and diligent to make his calling and election sure. Redemption is sure in itself, and free grace reigns conspicuously in it, yet wisdom and sovereignty do appear in this, that it is not of all; therefore study ye to make it sure by fleeing to Christ by faith, and by the study of holiness and mortification in His strength, and through the power of His death, which will be proof of your interest in it." "It becomes you not to dispute with God [about election, etc.], but to seek with more solicitude, and with holy and humble carefulness to make the matter sure to yourselves; we may well raise storms by our disputes,

but shall come to no peace by them; this can only be come at by fleeing to the hope set before us."

The argument is, that if all are not saved, be sure to make your calling and election sure, by fleeing to Christ as offered in the Gospel. The keyword is "believe," and this faith is obtained from God through hearing the Gospel; therefore use the means of grace, and in due time God by His Spirit will draw, and make it plain. If elected, you were elected not because you are, or think you are going to be, holy, but in order to be holy. In due time the Lord will even give the evidence of your election.

It is rather noteworthy that the Reformed Church in 1857 should publish such thoroughly Reformed doctrine; and this in the year of the secession in Michigan, and after Fraeligh and those consorting with him had ex-communicated her in 1822 as a false church; and it is remarkable that in the year 1856, just before the western secession, the famous "Rejection of Errors" should be re-published by the Eastern Reformed Church, and that the professors in the Theological School at Kampen, Netherlands, say in the preface of their edition of the Five Points (Canons of Dort, with the Rejection of Errors), in October, 1856, that the edition was "published at the request of the Classis of the Holland Reformed Churches in North America." This little book was widely distributed in the Michigan settlements in 1856-7.

Recurring to the question of Predestination as understood in Reformed Churches, Prof. Jas. S. Cannon, of the New Brunswick Seminary, in lecturing to his students on Pastoral Theology, Lectures, p. 267, said, "We must not prophesy smooth things, to please our friends, nor to sell the truth for the price of the favor of those who either rule in the world of fashion or hold the purse-strings of the congregation." And on page 266 of these lectures, the professor added, "To preach the word in wisdom; that is to say, with that regard to persons and circumstances which promise more success in the work. There are elementary truths

in religion, 'first principles of the doctrine of Christ.' In the Scriptures there is 'milk for babes' and 'strong meat' for those more advanced in Christian knowledge and experience. There are truths which the human mind readily perceives; and there are truths, the evidence of which cannot be seen until men have searched the Scriptures, until they are awakened and endowed with new principles and taste. These facts the minister must keep in view. He must not preach without discrimination as to times, any doctrine of the Divine Word. He must not ring the changes upon the doctrines of Divine Sovereignty, Predestination, and Election wherever he goes. The Apostles, though armed with miraculous powers, did not do this; they were stewards, but wise stewards. Strong meat they withheld from those who were weak, for they knew that sincere penitence in a sinner's soul would open his eyes upon the truth of those doctrines which the hardened in heart would be disposed to reject. Hence they went forth preaching repentance and the cross of Christ, as the medium of reconciliation. Their example we must imitate. We must not drop from our preaching any article of Christian faith, but we must present truths in their order, and on those occasions, after those precious instructions of the Apostles, which shall recommend what we preach to the serious attention and consideration of those who hear us."

That was good Reformed doctrine at Dort and in the Reformed Dutch Church, and should have been such at Schraalenburgh and Hackensack in 1822, and in Michigan in 1857.

John Milton was not a heretic, but he said "man was created perfect, though free to fall." This, with the doctrine of predestination, places us before one of the thousands of riddles of the universe. If man was free to fall, and yet was predestined to be saved or lost, how was he free? If man was predestined from all eternity, he was, so far as he is concerned, predestinated from all eternity, even though "from all eternity" is with the Almighty an everlasting present. It

is evident that Paul caught what he said about predestination from the vocabulary of the Almighty. He saw and heard things, he tells us, he could not utter in human language. These things were heard and seen on the plane of the Almighty, who is not bound by time and space. But to man, who exists in the finite human plane or sphere, the mystery is incomprehensible. Paul, especially, gave us to understand that the mystery was so profound as to be untranslatable into earthly language. And this brings us to the question why Paul spoke at all about such a tremendous problem. Why did he say, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, and whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified?" Paul and other Bible writers spoke about this because it was revealed to them as the golden chain that binds the soul to God—a chain that cannot be broken.

It was necessary to reveal the absolute sovereignty of God and the free grace of God which rescues sinners from their utter depravity and inability. And what a chain it is; foreknowledge, election, calling, justification, and glorification. It is no wonder that the soldiers of Prince Maurice and of Cromwell, and the fighting saints who fought the Eighty Years War, who felt this golden chain so strongly, were invincible.

The "doctrines of grace," so-called in all Reformed Churches, including election, must be preached as part of revelation given for a purpose. These doctrines make the sinner seek salvation. They make him truly humble in his utter weakness and worthlessness before the Lord. They show the reign of free grace in the plan of salvation,—that the source of salvation is not in self, but in God. And rightly understood, these doctrines are exceedingly conducive to good works and holiness. But if they are lost sight of, and ignored, a finite human reason would be enthroned, utterly unable to understand the universe, — in a domain it cannot comprehend, and as Coles observed, "without a divine compass and an anchor within the veil."

These doctrines of grace make each human soul "direct-connected" with God, and each human sinner therefore is solely responsible to God, and is the direct concern of God. And hence, the domination and dictation by priests, and councils, and consistories, and Church Rules, as controlling forces, are entirely knocked out, and forever, in Reformed Churches. Each Calvinistic believer is largely his own prophet, priest and king, so that the principles of democracy in church and state root in these same doctrines of grace and sovereignty of God; and closely connected with them are the so-called Christian Liberties (about which Calvin wrote a whole chapter), and also the idea of the autonomy of the local churches, which is such a distinguishing feature of Calvinism.

The Scripture give us simply glimpses of the affairs of heaven and the hereafter, and in this narrow vale between the peaks of two eternities, they give us, as it were, merely a sight of the glorious morning-red of heaven. It is enough for us that great things are at hand, but we cannot pry into the secret things of God. In this dark and gloomy world, the Scriptures tell us a great deal about our duties, for we have the more sure word of prophecy; whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in our hearts.

We may insist upon predestination and allied doctrines too persistently. They then become like "potent medicines, which injudiciously administered, kill instead of cure." There is "milk for babes," as well as "strong meat" for men. In presenting the gospel message to the uninitiated, we do well to place a light on a stand at the window, so that it can illumine the pathway upward; but on that stand we must place Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and Coles' "God's Sovereignty," and upon these the New Testament, open at the fifteenth of Luke.

But withal, according to the Scriptures, as a result of the sovereign act of God, election is the root of the whole matter. "Faith and holiness are not the foun-

dation or top-stone of election," but are as "stalks and branches" to that root, election; and, as Coles remarks, "Good works are a part of election, and the elect are as absolutely ordained to them as to salvation itself. John XV, 16."

The mere belief and advocacy of the dogma of predestination amount to little in themselves. The Scriptures plainly intimate that all will not be saved, that all in themselves deserve to be lost, and that if some are saved—elected—it is only by the special grace of God. The real point involved is whether there is present faith in the righteousness of Christ as a substitute for our own unrighteousness. We must look for faith, —the gift of God,—and for what follows in its train,— the signs, the evidences, of our own election. Not election as a doctrine so much, but the evidences of election, must be our chief concern.

VII. THE CHURCH OF GOD

THE Church of Christ consists of true believers of all ages, past, present, and to come. The church is the body of Christ, with Christ as Head. There is, therefore, only one true church in all the ages. This church is called the Holy Universal Church, or the Holy Catholic (General) Church, as in the Apostles' Creed. As the dead and living saints are members of this Church, and as the exercise of faith and other religious functions are partly visible and invisible, this Church General is considered in two aspects,—the visible and invisible church, even as a man with body and soul, is partly visible and invisible, yet one man. The invisible church is always the real essence of the visible church, and usually becomes visible only piecemeal, that is locally, over the earth. The local church is not the Church of Christ, but is only a manifestation of the Church Universal, independent in the first centuries of the Christian era, and independent still, as a complete local manifestation of the Holy General Church, but under the duty of uniting with other local churches as much as possible, in order to accentuate and approach the unity of the Church Universal, with the obligation also, however, not to sell herself into slavery to any classis or synod or hierarchy. In fact, if a local church binds herself to any larger body, that larger body must adhere to the rule of the Scriptures, or there may be no union as part of Christ's Church, but only a mere human annexation.

The Scriptures are the rule by which churches are known and judged. God, through the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, gathers the elect, and by the preaching of the Word keeps them under the discipline of the

Bible. The invisible church is really the organism which unites by the Spirit the elect under Christ as head. If there is a circle of elect believers in a local church having communion of saints, no matter how weak their services are, they are a church—not a mere human club.

The visible church is the church as she appears on earth, in her services, works, outward worship, etc. As such she appears locally, both singly and as united with other local churches, and is, of course, subject to imperfections and deformation and reformation, with the duty to adhere to the Scriptures as her only rule of faith and life. How far the so-called visible church is a part of the real church depends upon the election of God. If elected and brought by the Spirit, through the ministry of the Word, from darkness into light, a believer is a member of the great Invisible Church; but membership in the visible church is procured by the action of man, with the result that many unbelievers, called by the Reformed Confession "hypocrites," find their way into the Church on earth. On account of human inability to read the heart, the rule in admitting members to the church necessarily is limited to a good confession and an exemplary life; but whether a member merely assumes these qualities, and makes a good confession and outwardly leads a holy life, only in appearance, without genuineness, is known to himself and God alone. Hence, while the real visible church is always a part of the invisible church, this visible church, on account of human limitations, has many members on her rolls who are not enrolled in the Book of Life.

That the reader may know more about this matter, something of what Calvin and Brakel say on the subject is here subjoined, for further information:

Brakel, a celebrated Dutch divine, who about two centuries ago wrote the excellent work entitled *Reasonable Religion*, objects to dividing the church into visible and invisible. Man, he says, is visible in body, but invisible in mind and soul; visible believers are not

in two kinds of churches. We speak of a church consisting of true believers; this church fights for the faith, is sometimes more visible than at other times, and in regard to her internal spiritual state (gestalte) is invisible, but visible in her meetings and persons. It is one thing to join the church, and another to be a real member; the one does not always follow the other; members are accepted by men, who know only what is visible, but cannot judge the heart; God judges the heart; the new birth, or its probability, is not set up as a rule in accepting members, but the confession of truth, and a life in accordance with the confession, is the rule; the rest is left to themselves and to God. In the church, or of the church, are different matters. We cannot know the church from the rebirth of her members, but from true doctrine and the holiness of her members together. These two can be known, and where they are, humanly speaking, there is the true church. Whether a member has these two truly, or in appearance (schijn) only, is a matter between himself and God. Regeneration, or the new birth of members, is not a mark of the true church for the guidance of others."—Brakel, Vol. 1, pp. 548-55.

The reference in the following is to Allen's translation of Calvin's noted commentary on the Apostles' Creed, known as "Institutes of the Christian Religion."

Chapter 1, Book IV, of Calvin's Institutes, is on "The True Church and the Necessity of our Union with Her, being the Mother of all the Pious." Calvin says that our ignorance and slothfulness, and vanity of mind, require external aids in order to the production of faith in our hearts, and its increase and progressive advance to its completion, and that God has provided such aids in compassion to our infirmity—the preaching of the Gospel by the Church. "The word 'Church' in the Apostles' Creed refers not only to the visible church, but likewise to all the elect of God, including the dead as well as the living. Unless we are united with all other members under Christ our Head,

we can have no hope of the future inheritance. Therefore the Church is called Catholic or Universal; because there could not be two or three churches, without Christ being divided, which is impossible. But all the elect of God are so connected with each other in Christ, that they depend upon one head, and thus they grow up together as into one body, being made truly one, as living by one faith, hope, and charity, through the Spirit, to the same inheritance in one God and Christ. The article of the Creed relates, however, in some measure to the external church, so that every one may maintain a brotherly agreement with all the children of God, and pay deference to the authority of the Church, and conduct himself as one of the flock. Therefore we add 'Communion of Saints,' as though it had been said that the saints are united in fellowship of Christ on this condition, that whatever benefits God confers they should mutually communicate to each other," p. 223. Calvin further says, "We are not called to distinguish in the church the reprobates from the elect, which is not our province, but must be assured in our minds that we are partakers of God's grace," p. 224. "Christ, 'that he might fill all things, gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints until the measure of the fullness of Christ.' God could easily make His people perfect in a single moment, yet it was His will that they should grow under the education of the Church. Hence it follows, that all who reject the spiritual food of their souls, extended by the Church, deserve to perish with hunger and thirst." "It is God who inspires us with faith, but it is through the Gospel, as Paul says that 'faith cometh by hearing.' So also the power to save resides in God, but, as Paul says in another place, he displays it in the preaching of the Gospel," p. 225. God confines us to the teaching of the Church, and as Paul says, the Church can be edified only by the preaching of the word, and the saints have no common bond except while learning and profiting by the order which God has pre-

scribed for His Church; for nothing is more valued by believers than this assistance, by which God gradually raises His people from one degree of salvation to another, p. 227.

Next Calvin refers to the two scripture senses of the church. 1. All believers of all time, and, 2, "the whole multitude dispersed over the world, who profess to worship one God and Christ, who are initiated into his faith by baptism, and who testify their unity in true doctrine and charity by a participation of the sacred supper, who consent to the Word of the Lord, and preserve the ministry Christ instituted for the purpose of preaching it. In this Church are included many hypocrites, who have nothing of Christ but the name and appearance; many persons ambitious, avaricious, envious, slanderous, and dissolute in their lives, who are tolerated for a time, either because they cannot be convicted by a legitimate process, or because discipline is not always maintained with sufficient vigor. As it is necessary to believe in that Church, which is invisible to us, and known to God alone, so this Church, which is visible to men, we are commanded to honor, and to maintain communion with it," p. 230.

Calvin then says that the Lord has given this visible Church certain marks and characters. He quotes Augustine as saying, "According to the secret predestination of God, there are many sheep without the pale of the Church, and many wolves within." He seals the elect, and we cannot tell who they are; but has accommodated Himself to our capacity by setting certain marks by which to find who ought to be considered His children. "And as it was not necessary that on that point we should have an assurance of faith, he has substituted in its place a judgment of charity, according to which we ought to acknowledge as members of the Church all those who by a confession of faith, and exemplary life, and a participation of the sacraments, profess the same God and Christ with ourselves."

"But a knowledge of the body itself being more necessary to our salvation, He has distinguished it by

more clear and certain characters. Hence the visible Church rises conspicuously to our view. For wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a Church of God; for His promise can never deceive—'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them'."

"But, that we may have a clear understanding of the whole of this subject, let us proceed by the following steps: That the Universal Church is the whole multitude, collected from all nations, who though dispersed in countries widely distant, nevertheless consent to the same truth of Divine doctrine, and are united by the same bond of religion; that in this Universal Church are comprehended particular churches, distributed according to human necessity in various towns and villages; that each of these respectively is justly distinguished by the name and authority of a church; and that individuals, who, on a profession of piety are enrolled among churches of the same description, though they are really strangers to any particular church, do, nevertheless, in some respect belong to it, till they are expelled from it by a public decision."

"There is some difference, however, in the mode of judging respecting private persons and churches. For it may happen, in the case of persons whom we think altogether unworthy of the society of the pious, that, on account of the common consent of the Church, by which they are tolerated in the body of Christ, we may be obliged to treat them as brethren, and to class them in the number of believers. In our private judgment we do not approve of such persons as members of the Church, but we leave them the station they hold among the people of God, till it be taken away from them by legitimate authority."

"But respecting the congregation itself, we must form a different judgment. If they possess and honor the ministry of the word and the administration of the sacraments, they are, without all doubt, entitled

to be considered as a church, because it is certain that the Word and sacraments cannot be unattended with some good effects. In this manner, we preserve the unity of the Universal Church, without interfering with the authority of those legitimate assemblies which local convenience has distributed in different places," p. 231.

In the above, Calvin has the one Universal church in mind distributed as local churches in towns and villages, as human necessity dictated. It is clear that in the visible church are many hypocrites, but it is nevertheless true, that in order to become members of the real church, we must join the visible church, unless for good cause this is impossible. Calvin admits the condition of admission to membership in the visible church is confession of faith, an exemplary life, and participation of the sacraments only, while as to membership in the real church God is the Judge. All in the real converted church are members, while in the visible church on earth, there are many who are members only in appearance, but cannot be convicted on account of human inability to judge infallibly; hence the rule of charity in the church is to judge as far as possible, namely, by outward acts instead of by judging the heart.

The Church of Christ is one then, and so far as this one church manifests herself on earth, she does it whenever there is a genuine local church. Calvin does not know of such organizations as classis or synod, nor do the Reformed Churches recognize such organizations, except as the result of the combined efforts of several different local churches for common purposes.

When Calvin says that "wherever we find the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a Church of God," he means, not Romanists, Reformed, or Methodist, but all those who "by confession of faith, an exemplary life, and participation of the sacraments, confess the same God and Christ with ourselves," no matter where

or in what denomination. Whatever we may think of others, the rule of charity above referred to, applies, while God will do the judging in the end infallibly. This requires us to be careful in passing judgment on others, and other denominations. The rule of charity limits us to a good confession and a holy walk as criteria of church membership, and St. Paul was not rambling when he said, Phil. 3:15, 16, "and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, whereto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing"; which means that in spite of certain differences, we must walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing, that is, the essentials. In minding essentials, and not non-essentials, the Synod of Dort recognized baptism by Roman Catholics, and Calvin, although condemning the government of the Romish Church and her mass, did not deny that there were real churches in the Romish church where the Spirit of God wrought. If the real church is the body of Christ, and this body is manifest locally by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, it is wrong for any one to condemn such a local church, if there are defects in the preaching, the sacraments, or discipline. All are not agreed even as to what are fundamental doctrines; Methodists, e. g., also claim they have the pure preaching of the Word, and they deduce their standards from the same Word as others do. But the grand doctrine of remission of sins through Christ is a fundamental principle also recognized by them; and from this we should reason, leaving it to God to judge infallibly.

The secession "from all Protestant denominations," as featured by the Seceders in Michigan in 1857, is therefore probably one of the most high-handed repudiations of the divinity and unity of the Church of Christ on record. These Seceders really excommunicated the strongest, most scriptural churches in America, and in their place set up a separate organization which recognized no other

church on earth to be genuine except a few in the Netherlands, in defiance of Scripture and of the Christian sense as developed by the Church during eighteen centuries, as shown by Calvin and the Reformed Synods. That secession in 1857 from the Reformed Church and all other Protestant denominations, showed such a disregard of the real spiritual essence of church unity, and such an insistence upon non-essentials such as mere church rules, that the question arises whether those Seceders of 1857 were not in danger of actually setting up a false church; for while the Reformed Church believed in judging Church Rules by the Forms of Concord, and the latter by the Bible, those Seceders elevated Rules into Forms of Concord, and then demanded unconditional acceptance of them, thus ascribing more authority to their own ordinances than to the Bible. They also refused to submit to the yoke of Christ, when they refused to submit to the form read before communion putting it up to each one whether he eats or drinks judgment to himself, but added to and took from the sacraments as suited themselves. They did worse: they disowned, repudiated, seceded from, excommunicated, other Protestant churches, and so persecuted many of those who walked in the fear of God. It is no wonder that, since 1857, those Seceders have been obliged largely to recede from their position, for it was partly anti-Christian and totally un-Reformed.

In this and other chapters of a similar nature in this series of papers, the writer is not unmindful of the fact that a strong, though heterodox, distinction was made by the western Seceders some years ago, between the Church Universal on the one hand, and a church denomination on the other. These Seceders claimed the right to separate themselves, in certain cases, from a denomination in order to remain in the Church Universal; that is, they left the false church in order to remain in the General Church, the true Church. This procedure is incontestibly right, according to the Scriptures, when applied to a denomination,

whenever the latter, like a false church, permits, fosters, and extends overwhelming fundamental errors touching the question of salvation, but is wrong when applied in all other cases. And while the existence of so many denominations is not an encouraging sign, yet, in view of the terrible weaknesses of humanity, the fact that so many children of God have succeeded in uniting so many autonomous local churches into denominations, of which several are very large, is indeed a very encouraging sign. These denominations are the result of the innate desire of the Christian heart for unity, and they are therefore a great approach to the unity of the Universal Church. And if so, these denominations, unless there are valid Scriptural reasons to the contrary, are sacred as against those who, instead of increasing the desired unity, reverse the process, and, by seceding, increase the disunion.

If denominations are the result of the yearnings for Christian unity, he who secedes from a denomination on points of mere Church Rules not touching essentials, and on matters of emphasizing more or less certain doctrines, and meanwhile claims that he remains in the old denomination and is entitled to the property of the denomination, has not made out a very clear case of corruption in matters affecting salvation. In the State Church of Holland in 1834, and later, great fundamental errors were not repressed, and the expulsion of De Cock, Scholte, and others, settled the question as to them without a doubt. But when some churches in a denomination remain orthodox and others remain heterodox, the rule becomes complicated, and the most orthodox minds in Holland disagree on it to this day. The writer does not here pass judgment on the subject, because, in 1857, when some of the Hollanders in Michigan seceded, there was not a single church in the Reformed Church, East or West, that did not preach every doctrine necessary to salvation, and there was not a single rationalist in that Church; and, what is more, the General Synod of that Church was never more insistent on pure doctrine

than at that time, when she showered over her churches, among the hundreds of pamphlets, even the "Rejection of Errors" of the Synod of Dort. It is therefore quite plain that the Seceders of 1857 were not in fact leaving the church in order to remain in the Church, but they left the church in order to establish a secession church. And this brings us back to the difference between transferring membership from one denomination to another "without contention," as Calvin said, and the attempt to break up a church and setting up a rival church which claims to be the Church as against the one seceded from. The real question at issue in that secession of 1857, is whether these Seceders had a right under Reformed doctrine and practice, to start a rival church as against the Reformed Church, under the slogan that they left that church in order to remain in the real Church, which implied that the Reformed Church was not a part of the Church, and was therefore a false church, while later these Seceders have recognized that Reformed Church as one of the sister churches in the great Universal Church. A great error was committed by the Seceders either in 1857, or later when they reversed their decision.

VIII. THE LOCAL CHURCH

IF A LOCAL church is the local manifestation of the body of Christ, it follows that such a local church must have the characteristics of the Universal Church. It cannot be denied that according to the Scriptures the organic whole of the Christian Church is the invisible church, and that in the invisible church the local visible churches are component parts, while larger bodies, like classes and synods, are what may be called groups, formed by several local churches combining their independent and separate powers freely for common objects. The local churches in the New Testament, particularly in Revelation, each had the complete essence of a church, while occasionally mention is made in the Scriptures of those extraordinary meetings, as in Acts XV. Later, councils or synods were held, but in each case, as also in the formation of denominations, these outward connections or bonds were the result of confederation of independent autonomous local churches.

The local church consists of a body of believers, using the means of grace, and even if such church is isolated, her character is complete. If she is a manifestation of the body of Christ, her character as a real church is assured, and the connection in which she enters with other visible churches does not necessarily destroy her essence. The apostles never speak of visible churches as in connection with other visible churches, and Revelation speaks of seven churches, and each is called a Church of God. The election is really the basis of unity with the body of Christ, and Christ being over all, these local churches must combine, for since a local church is a manifestation of the Universal

Church in a particular locality, she must see to it that she brings out locally the unity of this Invisible Church by joining with other local churches, on the basis of unity of essential doctrines.

The local church is a cell of the general church, and not of a national or synodical church. She is a member of the invisible church, and remains so, even if all other churches drop out. She does not owe her existence to a synod or council or national or territorial church, but synods and territorial churches exist as a result and because of local churches. She is a church because Christ lives and works in her, and not because some synod recognizes her. Denominations consist of autonomous local churches, while local churches consist of members; members are members of local churches only, while local churches are members of the denomination. The local church is the unit, and under the Reformed system, her consistory, and therefore the local church herself, as a single body, alone enters into combination with other local churches. An individual church member can, therefore, merely secede from his local church, while the local church only can secede from a denomination. The responsibility for church connection with other churches therefore rests primarily on the consistory, or government of the local churches, and not on the individual member. What happens in another congregation is not, therefore, in the first instance, chargeable to a private member of a local church, but to the consistory. "Solidaire verantwoordelijkheid," as known among Hollanders, "common responsibility" for what happens in other churches of a denomination, if such responsibility arises, rests directly upon the consistory and indirectly on private members; and before errors in other churches can justify a secession by an individual from his local church, his consistory must be exceedingly negligent in combatting such errors. If his consistory does not permit his local church to fall into like errors, but maintains his church on Scriptural basis, the connection of his church with a denomination in which

some consistories are not so faithful and watchful, does not deprive his local church of her Christ-bought membership in the Church of God; and if the connection of his church does not necessarily destroy or impair seriously the essence of his local church, he is not justified in deserting her by secession, unless he is forced thereto.

This principle of limited responsibility for other churches, and larger responsibility for his own local church was not understood by the Hollanders in America. And yet it seems to be the Bible rule; and even, in Holland, in most cases, during the Reformation, people did not secede from their local churches, but the local churches properly broke off connection with the Romish Church. In the Holland of the last century, too, there were many excellent orthodox churches in the State Church, which deplored the illegal government of that church, but they drew a line between the being and well-being of a local church so strongly as to submit even to the reception of rationalistic members from other churches. While this appears a very questionable policy, it is admitted by the Seceders in Holland that many of these orthodox churches in the State Church are true churches and not false churches, or synagogues of Satan, because they preach the Word powerfully, and do not neglect the sacraments.

Of course, if an organization forces a local church into errors in fundamentals, the local consistory has a right to break with such organization; and if the consistory submits to errors in fundamentals locally, the individual member has a right to demand reform or to secede. But such a general statement means little in itself, because all do not agree as to what are errors in fundamentals. In order to obtain a closer view of the subject, the following is added, with recognition, of what the learned Dr. Kuyper has written on this subject, in his work on Reformation of Churches, published in 1884.

On p. 168 of said work, Dr. Kuyper says, "*All* Reformed theologians hold the preaching of the Word as

DR. A. KUYPER AT 80

a mark of the true church; *most* of them add the administration of the sacraments as the second mark; and a *few* of them add discipline as a third mark. The Synod of Dort gave these three marks, and added the word 'pure' to each one; and a few people reading of these marks, straightway conclude that if there is the least weakness in one of these marks in a church, she is a false church, and they secede and secede again." Calvin does not include discipline among the marks of a true church, and the Lutheran Church has no discipline as Reformed people understand the term; but none deny the character of a true church to the Lutheran, and Calvin is considered the great father of Reformed Churches. In 1618-19 the Synod of Dort in order to emphasize in the strongest way the difference between the Reformed churches, on one hand, and the Romish and Anabaptists churches and other sects, on the other hand, set up the three marks by which the true church certainly may be known, as follows: "If the true doctrine of the Gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing sin—in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hence the true church may certainly be known; from which no man has a right to separate himself,"—Art. XXIX of Confession. In the same article the marks of members of the true church are: faith; and when they have received Christ as Savior, to avoid sin, follow righteousness, and love God and neighbors, etc. This avoidance of sin is something different from Antinomianism. In Art. 29, also, the Synod of Dort describes the false church in positive terms, but that synod does not say that a church is a false church whenever one of these three marks is lacking or defective, or that if discipline is not rigidly applied in a church, she is a false church. Nothing of the kind; but the synod said: "As for the false church, she ascribes more power and authority

to herself and her ordinances, than to the Word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does she administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but adds to, and takes from them, as she thinks proper; she relieth more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness and idolatry. These two churches [the true and the false] are easily known and distinguished from each other." The Synod of Dort laid down these principles, as against the Romish Church, and also as against the numerous sects existing, as general rules to be observed. But if one insists that this Synod did demand rigid discipline as an indispensable mark of a true church, then this synod must likewise be held to have insisted on persecution as a necessary mark for a false church. Persecution as a mark of a false church, was entirely lacking in the Reformed Church in 1857, and hence the western Seceders of that time were schismatics and rebels, according to Art. 29 of their own Confession, for they were the ones who insisted on the strict interpretation of the Church Standards so strenuously.

Reformed theologians, of course, understood the Synod of Dort, and they were not slow in explaining the meaning of Art. 29 of the Confession. (This confession was revised a little by the Synod of Dort, and is hence often spoken of as the work of Dort). John a Marck, a Dutch theologian of the first rank, and after him, Bernard de Moor and Turretin, soon explained that the real marks of a church are soundness in fundamental doctrine and holiness of life, and that the three marks of Dort are not equally necessary, and that there is in all of them some room for gradual differences. In view of the two ways of judging a church,—the scriptural or objective, and the personal or subjective, methods,—great care is required to reach the correct way. The subjective way says that the church is a gathering of those who are saved, and the members must therefore be characterized by holiness. The ob-

jective manner of judging is that from the outward appearance of a church as such, and not from the life of members directly. The difficulty of judging the heart is avoided in the latter, and, consequently, also the danger of falling into the Labadistic ideas of a pure and spotless church on earth. This leads to the conclusion that the scriptural, objective test is the only safe way, and that therefore the holiness of members is not the mark of a church, but the character in which the church shows herself is the real mark. The Labadists, and like sects, forgot that the present dispensation is full of imperfections, that the heart is not amenable to human judgment, and that they cannot separate the wheat from the tares until the harvest, that the elect are concealed more or less, and that there are churches where all the elect members have died, while other elect ones have not yet joined. It is well here to consider what Calvin says about the Church at Corinth and about the Jews.

Dr. Kuyper, p. 171 of his work on the Reformation of Churches says, further, that a church must have a pure confession and a holy life, and be judged only as the work of the church appears from the life of her members. The question is not whether every member is pure in confession, but whether the church makes the good confession, and whether in her life (wandel) as a church respect for, and obedience to, the Scriptures is in evidence. This can appear only from her open acts, and the question is, is her preaching the application of the Word, do her sacraments carry the sacramental grace, and does she protect the Word and sacraments by suitable discipline? This is the general rule, but Reformed theologians let slip discipline as not necessary to the *being,* but only to the *well-being* of a church. See Witsius against the Labadists, pp. 159-174; De Moor, Comm. in Marck L. V. 42; and Calvin's Institutes, L. IV., c9, where he says a church exists where the Word and sacraments are, even though not

pure. These theologians drop discipline as a mark of the true church, because rigid insistence upon that mark leads swiftly to Donatism and Labadism.

Discipline was not in evidence in the Christian Church for fifteen centuries or more, and yet the church existed. The test is whether the Holy Spirit finds in a church a suitable instrument of the new birth of the elect, for the purpose of a church on earth is to be the instrument of the Spirit to that end; and where the Word is preached and the sacraments administered, the Holy Spirit, according to the Scriptures, has such an instrument, so that discipline cannot be an indispensable mark of the church considered in her being, not well-being. And even the preaching and the sacraments need not be absolutely pure, for minor imperfections in doctrine do not justify secession. See Calvin's Institutes, L. IV.

Turretin, one of the profoundest of Dutch theologians, probably ranking next to Witsius, has correctly laid down the rule when he says, "Further, let us not forget that the three marks present different degrees of necessity. In the first rank stands pure preaching and confession of the Word, without which we cannot well conceive of a church; but the administration of the sacraments is evidently of less importance, and this can fall away without the church falling, as was shown in Israel repeatedly. But with discipline we go still farther, and say that, while a church cannot be kept in good order without it, the lack of discipline does not in itself kill the essence (being) of the church. Further, these three marks leave a certain degree of liberty; they can be pure or less pure, and can make the church pure or less pure, according as they approach or recede from the Scriptures. Defects and weaknesses may be tolerated, but not fundamental errors. A church erring in fundamentals cannot remain standing, but errors in a few smaller particulars do not make her a false church. She may be impure, and corrupt in part, without ceasing to be a church. Finally be it noted, that a church

may not be judged from particular utterances of her leaders, but by her public confession which she has adopted and retained."—Kuyper's Tractaat, p. 173-4.

This reduces the question of a right to secede from a church to a much narrower basis than is commonly supposed. In Michigan some of the Hollanders claimed that "if there was anything in the Reformed Church which they did not like," they could secede; but such a doctrine is diametrically opposed to all Reformed doctrine, as gathered and classified by Calvin and others, and as declared by the Synod of Dort. The Church of Christ is one, and appears locally pure, and sometimes not so pure. Dr. Kuyper says, every soul, not any more entirely dead, lives; and every soul not yet alive is entirely dead; what is not yet false, is yet a true church, and what is not any more a true church is a false church. And the general rule adopted is that when fundamental errors overwhelm a church, and there is no saving truth of importance left, such church ceases to be a church, and has become a false church. Reformation of a church is therefore always a duty, while desertion or secession is the last resort. If a church is yet fit to be used by the Holy Spirit to bring to light the elect, she is not a false church; but if the preaching of remission of sins through Christ is neglected and interfered with, such church is far gone. But if there are faithful members in a church, and the church does not proscribe the faithful, the latter must labor to purify this church. The whole matter seems to simmer down to a question of whether a local church forces her faithful members to engage in anything not instituted by Christ, or into disobedience to God. If they are not hindered in their service of God by a local church, they must not desert; for if the Church visible is as yet a manifestation of the body of Christ, and is therefore not a false church, (and she is not, so long as the Word and sacraments are not lacking), secession is really rebellion. A human body may be weak, but is therefore not dead. Secession in obedience to God is not secession, but is a return to the real church. An

attempt to reform must not be neglected, and only a painful necessity justifies secession; for a weak or defective church is not a false church according to Paul. In the local church obedience to God must be maintained and expressed, and if the local church permits this, she is not dead or false. Each member is responsible for errors or defects in his local church, and if the latter does not prevent efforts at reform, she is alive. The question is, is the being, not the well-being, of the church gone.

Getting the truth out of the Confession or out of one's own experience is not the guide, but the Bible is the only safe rule. The pure doctrine of the Gospel spoken of by the Synod of Dort, as we have already seen, does not consist in predestination or any one doctrine magnified so as to destroy all equilibrium of doctrines, nor in the use of psalms only, nor in preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism, nor in any other detail of Church Rules. Purity of doctrine does not consist in what a few uninformed seceders in Holland in 1840, or in Michigan in 1857, thought it was. It does not consist in the personal opinion or anger of a few, who confuse themselves with Christ, like Dr. Fraeligh in 1822, or those who think Christ is cast out of the Reformed Church, because they are thrown out, like Rev. L. J. Hulst in 1881. It does not consist in dissatisfaction with church decisions, nor in rigid adherence to church institutions in themselves, nor in interpreting the Bible by Church Rules, as was done in Michigan in 1857. Forms of Concord even cannot compel the consciences of believers, for the only appeal is to the Bible. These Forms are not of equal importance with the Scriptures, are not the object of unconditional acceptance as the Bible is, and they can and ought to be changed whenever the enlightened conscience of all Reformed Churches of the world is ripe for the change.

If the Church of God were a mere human institution, the matter of secession would be comparatively simple; but since the church is divine in origin, and the Spirit works through and in her, it is necessary to

conclude that the Lord has something to say as to whether a church is to be chastized or enlightened; to conclude that a highly spiritual church is the work of God, and not the gift of man; that real reformation in the Church is the work of God; and that desertion of a local church can be just only when it occurs in necessary obedience to God, not in self-righteous Phariseeism. So long as a church is not false or dead, a secession is never right, unless such church persecutes those who try to live holily, and casts them out.

The local church, in the Reformed Churches, is the point of beginning in the church on earth; she is a complete manifestation of the universal church; she expresses the unity of that greater church to the fullest extent by recognizing and joining other churches; but by the act of joining, the local church—pastor, elders and deacons—surrenders none of her rights and powers. In classes and synods the local churches are present themselves, and they can legislate and decide on matters of general concern, as the exchange of members, and the like. But nothing can be done by classes and synods which violates the Scriptures; and a local church cannot, by joining other churches, sell or dispose of the existing scriptural rights of the least of her members, nor of herself, nor can larger bodies usurp the powers of local churches. And those larger bodies are composed, not of the men present, but of the local churches present by their representatives, and such bodies as classes and synods, therefore, never exist except when the several local churches actually come together there; and when they adjourn they pass out of existence completely, and are referred to by number and year simply for purposes of facilitating reference to their minutes. But while broader assemblies like synods do not "put their sickle into a strange grainfield," it is a logical deduction from the principle of the autonomy of the local churches that when such churches are assembled in a synod, and have brought their full powers together there, such synod may also speak with authority, provided it speaks

the language of Christ and the New Testament. Reformed people all admit the authority of synods, provided they speak in consonance with the Scriptures. It is evident, however, that in Reformed circles, the bone of contention often is, not so much what the powers and authority of synods are, as what the Scriptures really require,—a question, which is at the base of the Masonic controversy among the Hollanders in the West, where some believe Masonry can be condemned in the mass by a synod, while others believe the errors in Masonry, if such there be, can only be reached by discipline in the local church in case of "actual facts, and those proved," in an individual case.

If a synod or a classis acts for the several local churches, within the bounds authorized by such local churches, in accordance with the Scriptures, these higher bodies must not be ignored; but if such synod attempts to force errors in fundamentals on a local church, the latter has a right to refuse compliance; if she refuses to obey illegal orders from above, no one has a right to secede from her, but she has, if forced to obey or be cut off, a right to break with the higher organization; and if she obeys illegal synod orders, and becomes a policeman for the Synod, her local members, if forced to comply, have a right to demand reform, or to secede if forced to submit. Members, as before stated, secede from a local church, while a local church does the seceding from a denomination. If the local church permits and requires obedience to God by her members, none may secede; and if a synod permits and requires a local church to maintain obedience to God, such local church may not secede; but if a synod forces important error on a church, the latter must protest, and if placed under constraint, has the legal right to secede. If the local church, that is, the consistory, vindicates the Word as against the rest of the denomination, it is rebellion to secede from such church.

If the duty of a church member is to see that his local church follows the Scriptural rule, and if his local

church is a member of a denomination, this church member has a right to insist that his church does not assist the denomination in forcing fundamental error on other local churches. Of course, in all these matters the rule of charity must be observed; but fundamental errors must be resisted; and the whole matter comes down to the old rules laid down by Calvin and the other later Reformed fathers, viz.: that one must remain in the local church, and the local church must remain in the denomination, until reform is so strongly resisted that persecution results in casting out the reformer. This rule of casting out, or persecution, given by Dort as a sign of a false church, is therefore generally, though not always, a safe rule to follow. Luther followed it; Rev. De Cock followed it in 1834, and Dr. Kuyper in 1886; while in America the Holland seceders did "the casting out" themselves. The only exception to the above rule is where a church or denomination is so inefficient, so negligent, and so moribund, that it even neglects or refuses to cast out protesting reformers; but such an exception even did not exist in 1822 or 1857 to justify those secessions.

What Calvin, Brakel, and others say about the right of secession, will be given in detail later on in another series of papers, so that the reader may see what "Reformed doctrine" says about the subject. But it is necessary to state that the Roman Catholic system of church government is that of a pure monarchy; the Lutheran, that of a territorial monarchy; the Congregational, that of a democracy with synods and higher bodies as unimportant; the Collegial system, that of the absolute independence of each church member, as involved in the principles of the French Revolution; and that the Reformed system is a democracy of local churches, as independent units in the universal church, of which the local church is the beginning, and synods, etc., are only resultants of the confederation of local churches freely joining in obedience to the invisible or spiritual unity of the body of Christ. The Romish church distrusted this spiritual unity, and substituted

a worldly government of popes and priests, where the laity is nothing. The Reformed system has as its foundation offices established by God—pastor, elder, and deacon—the consistory, which derives its powers from God, although elected by men. The layman is very important in Reformed churches. The authority of a consistory does not consist of powers surrendered by men, but of powers given by Christ; and hence it follows that when a denomination is formed by several local Reformed Churches, the combined government of this Church, whether called synod or council, can do nothing to destroy the being, the essence, the rights or powers of local churches; but such denomination is simply the result of the efforts of those local churches to approach the unity of the invisible church, and hence these synods or higher bodies are exceedingly important, and may not be broken with, unless, after protests and attempted reform, these higher bodies are guilty of letting loose overwhelming errors. Unity is a strong characteristic in the Church of Christ; the denominations are a great step towards this ideal unity, and therefore consistories of local churches must mind their steps closely before tearing the greater unity in pieces. The difference between the being and well-being of a local church must not be ignored in considering the sundering of the greater ties of denominational unity.

Dr. Kuyper also says, p. 203 of his work on Church Reformation, that the Seceders in Holland (since 1840) copied the error of the rationalists and Groningers, namely, that there was a great national church in Holland with local branches, and that they thought what the Church in a local division, at Ulrum for example, did, was done by the whole denomination, and that therefore secession from the whole organization was necessary in case of important errors locally. They failed to grasp the idea that the connection with other churches was simply the result of combination of local churches in which the real essence of the church was lodged, and not in the combination. They thought the denomination was the main idea, and that a local

church was merely a compartment of the larger organization—a great error, which involved an indorsement of Rome, and a repudiation of the Reformation.

What has been said above may generally be applied to denominations, although matters there become very complicated when some churches in the denomination deviate from the truth while others do not. Denominations must, however, be judged by about the same standard as a local church is, and that standard is purity in essentials only.

Dr. Kuyper, in 1884, really classed the seceders of 1834 as "Doleerende," that is, Complaining Churches, only temporarily out of the church connection. In order to justify their secession into an independent denomination they had to consider as false churches all the orthodox churches in the State Church in Holland, —which they did not; and if such were not false churches, the seceders were really schismatics, which conclusion they also denied; hence they were Complaining Churches organized independently too hastily.

Dr. Kuyper, apropos of the idea that the change of a church from a true to a false church was not a matter of a few days or years, but a long process of decay, says on page 197 of his *Tractaat van Reformatie van Kerken:* "And now we do not see how according to the Scripture and history it can be maintained that a church must be considered a false church or a synagogue of Satan, solely on account of the impure organization with which it is affiliated. In view of the terrible defection and corruption in the church of Israel, and in view of the decades and centuries our fathers hesitated before they considered the errors in the Church of Rome sufficient to justify secession, we naturally get the impression that the seceders [of 1834 and later] cannot escape the charge of having given up the sick too soon, and of having ordered the funeral of many a church which by God's goodness revived and flourished." This is certainly peculiarly strong testimony against the seceders from the Reformed Church in America, where the local churches and the govern-

ment of the Church—the General Synod—were in better health than the seceders themselves.

Rullman, in his *Strijd voor Kerkherstel,* p. 303, says that Dr. Kuyper, relative to the danger of being suspended and cut off on account of opposition to receiving members from other churches by certificate who were unsound in doctrine, said in substance: "In such case we could break with the synodal organization, but to do so would conflict with the way in which God's children have walked from Paradise till the present day. Those do not begin by breaking; they permit others to do the breaking; they first allow others to strike them and to cast them out, and then they consider what must be done." Savornin Lohman, on p. 304, same work, is quoted as saying of Kuyper: "But he did not break, on the ground that the breaking of the bond with the State Church would be considered too much of an arbitrary act."

What Dr. Kuyper, who was actually cast out in 1886, has written about the usurpation of seceders who "tear the most sacred bonds," is too voluminous for quotation here, but it is strong enough to completely overthrow the defences of the secessions from the Reformed Church in America. Even Free Masonry, as we have seen, in his opinion, did not justify the secession of 1882.

Most of the ideas in this chapter are those of Dr. Kuyper, as he deduced them from Calvin and the Scriptures. Kuyper studied the question, and whatever he studied he mastered. If Kuyper, or rather, Calvin, then, stated as the correct New Testament rule that when the essentials are not lacking, minor impurity in doctrine and great laxity of discipline, and even unchristian conduct in church members, do not make a true church a false one, it is not plain what conceivable right the seceders of 1857 in Michigan had to secede from the Reformed Dutch Church "and all the other Protestant denominations," on the ground of difference on mere questions involved in Church Rules, or on

questions of placing more or less emphasis on certain cardinal doctrines.

The logical deduction from the New Testament "plans and specifications" of God's House, as further developed from the Scriptures by the Reformed fathers from Calvin to date, referred to in this and the preceding chapter, is that each and every local church of every denomination is, and of right ought to be, an autonomous, complete representative of the Church Universal, with the Scriptures as its rule of faith and conduct. From this it follows that such local church must aspire to, and follow after, the greatest Christian unity attainable, in denominations if need be, but in as few denominations as possible. In pursuing the ideal unity or in the approach to unity, such local church retains all its powers and rights, subject only to the legitimate demands of the required unity. The local church must submit to the rule of the Bible absolutely, and under that rule she may not sell or compromise her own rights, nor those of the least of her members. It is, therefore, a question, e. g., in the matter of church music and all other questions not directly passed on in the Scriptures, whether those higher or broader bodies like Classes and synods, can dictate to the local churches at all, except to require such local churches to observe due care in preventing unscriptural abuses in those matters. The law of Christian Liberties allows great latitude in matters not touching salvation, and it is clear that no one may lay "another yoke" upon such churches. These "liberties" are allowed in the New Testament, and local churches have a right to insist upon the use thereof. It is clear, therefore, that the law of common responsibility of one church for the faults or irregularities of other churches in the denomination, called in Dutch, *solidaire verantwoordelijkheid,* when it comes into play at all, applies in case of essentials only, and not to things indifferent and those subject to the law of the Liberties. And hence, when there are abuses or errors in a certain local church or churches of a denomination, the other

churches of this denomination are not responsible, and are not in duty bound to secede, until these abuses, fostered instead of repressed by the denomination, become overwhelming errors, and the saving truths are impaired to such an extent that they are practically lost. So long as errors are not overwhelming fundamental errors, the duty of the local church may be to remonstrate and to attempt reformation, but she does not become responsible for those errors until they become so everwhelming that the inevitable result in such church or denomination is the subversion of the saving truths. When errors and corruption have usurped the place of sound doctrine and practice in a church, and the unavoidable consequence in such church or denomination is rationalism or something worse, separation certainly has become "the duty of all believers." But when the Law of Liberties is applied and all the saving doctrines are preached in a Church as was the case in the Reformed Dutch Church in 1857, secession on account of the use of hymns, Sunday Schools, and other "things indifferent" is heresy and rebellion, according to the Reformed Fathers.

It is evident that the seceders in Michigan, in 1857, knew about this law of common responsibility, but did not understand its proper application, for they set up a series of facts upon which to invoke this law against the Reformed Dutch Church, consisting of matters entirely within the domain of the Christian Liberties. They drew up an indictment against the Reformed Church containing four or five accusations of errors, which, if admitted to be true, were no worse than the "corrections" which the seceders substituted for the alleged errors. They charged the Reformed Church with deviations, which were as much, (if not more), in accord with recognized Reformed practice, as their own boasted "return to Dort." These seceders, under the spell of what occurred in the Netherlands some years before, interjected certain extreme notions into the Reformed system, and thought the Reformed Dutch Church heterodox when she refused to accept their

innovations. In Reformed Churches common responsibility exists for essential matters only, and not for things indifferent; nor does it exist for errors even, until after protest and attempted reformation, these errors become so strong and overwhelming that the church has lost its character and has become a false church. In that case the marks of the true church are lacking, and the inevitable result is that fundamental errors and corruption—the marks of the false church —only are present. It is at this point that the members of such a church become personally responsible under the law of common responsibility.

But, according to the New Testament, this law of common responsibility applies to the essentials, such as the divinity of Christ, and salvation through Christ only. This law certainly compels us to leave a false church which has seceded from Christ, in order that we may remain in the true church. But this same law of common responsibility just as powerfully compels us never to secede from a church which holds fast to the essentials of salvation through Christ. We may not secede from a church on account of hymns, feast-days, differences in conception of the application of subordinate doctrines and of Church Rules. The law of common responsibility compels us to do exactly the opposite of what the Seceders of 1822 and 1857 did. If we must "speak the same thing" and "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," and if Paul was right when he said, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of a new moon or of the sabbath-days," (Col. 2:16), and when he said, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing," (Phil. 3:16), the law of common responsibility operates strongly against secession from a church which has adopted and applied a system under which alone it is possible "to speak the same thing," and to "mind the same thing," namely, uniformity in essentials, and the principles of the Preface of Wesel in subordinate and non-essential matters.

When Groen Van Prinsterer, in the Netherlands, said in 1848, in substance, as will be more fully shown later, that common responsibility rested upon the members of a church for everything which flows from, and is the necessary result of the nature of that church, he was not referring to seceding from the Dutch Church in America, or from his own—the State Church, for he specifically refers to a rationalistic church, which, as he says, "has laid aside the whole armor of God." Whatever we may think of the State Church of Van Prinsterer's time,—a Church which he refused to secede from,—there is no doubt but that the law of common responsibility demands that we shall not dictate the use of psalms, feast-days, and other things in conflict with the New Testament spirit in any Church of Christ as the Seceders of 1857 attempted in the Reformed Church and the Classis of Holland. These seceders applied the law of "solidaire responsibility" to a wrong set of facts; and as a result, their secession from the Reformed Church of that day was not based on a solid and scriptural foundation. The Reformed Dutch Church was certainly more closely modeled after the plans and specifications of God's House than was the Secession Church in 1857.

IX. WHAT IS A REFORMED CHURCH?

THE Christian Church is not an association with a foundation changing from day to day, but is a divine institution based on truths whose acceptance, at all times, is the bond of believers. She is not a debating society or a scientific school, nor a club of individuals ruled by changing beliefs. The Church is in her organic life like a tree with many limbs, connected with the body and roots. So long as a branch is on the living tree, it flourishes, but if cut off, it withers and dies. The church is often compared to a building on a sure foundation,—a foundation which can never be disturbed. But the church is not brick and stone, but a living organism, the body of Christ, "rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith," and "increaseth with the increase of God." The learned Van Prinsterer said, "No believers, no company of believers, may consider themselves isolated from this divine whole, of which Christ is the head. Many do not consider that the root is often disowned by seceding from one of the branches, the foundation denied in the denial of part of the living stones of the building, and the Head rejected in the rejection of the members. The church must be tested by the Scriptures, but we must be careful not to reject divine truth, in whatever form it appears, lest we reject the unity of the Church, and deny what God works in the Church."—V. P. *Het Recht der Hervormde Gezindheid,* p. 52.

One of these branches of the Christian Church is the Reformed Church or Churches, but as such branch she may not without the best evidence pronounce other branches dead. How came so many branches in exist-

ence? The sense of the Scriptures was from time to time gathered by the enlightened spiritual conscience of holy men in the church, in councils assembled, when occasion required a specific declaration. All did not think alike, and since Paul speaks of a certain liberty even in matters of doctrine, churches already somewhat divided by lines of geography and race, in some respects also differed in their declarations of Bible truths. It so happened that the Reformation was a vast movement to get away from the Rules of the Romish Church, which were considered unscriptural, and it was during this time that these seceding or reforming churches proceeded to voice new declarations of their principles of faith and doctrine. The Lutherans in Germany, and the so-called Reformed people in France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, etc., adopted Confessions of Faith, differing, of course, on certain points, such as the doctrine and formulas of the Lord's Supper and the like. Holland and Belgium were in those days spoken of as one country, and the latter was called New Belgium for a while. Guido de Bres, who in 1562, wrote the so-called Netherlands Confession, lived in Belgium. The Belgian and Holland Reformed Churches gradually adopted this creed: hence it is called the Belgic Confession. The Reformed churches elsewhere adopted the same or similar confessions, and so this confession became the Form of Concord, or of Agreement, of all Reformed Churches. The Heidelberg Catechism, written in Germany, in 1563, also gradually became recognized in all Reformed Churches, and so became the second Form of Concord. In 1618-19, practically all the Reformed Churches of Europe were present in the Synod of Dort, and there revised the first Form of Concord a little. Owing to the uncertainty created by the Arminians of that day, this Synod also took a part of the said Form of Concord, and amplified it into what became known as the Canons of Dort. The Canons, adopted at this general Council of Reformed Churches at Dort, therefore became the third Form of Concord. These Canons deal principally

with the questions of predestination and free-will, and the abuse of these doctrines. They were only an enlargement of what the Confession had said in briefer form. Since the Synod of Dort no general Council of Reformed Churches has been held, and no revision of the three forms has been made.

The Synod of Dort, after the foreign delegates had withdrawn, remained in session as a national synod for the Reformed Churches in Holland, and as such, revised the Rules of Church Government, adopted at several preceding national synods, as the times and circumstances required. These Rules are not characteristic of all Reformed Churches, and are not therefore one of the Forms of Concord. They are rules adopted only by the churches of one nation or denomination, for the better order of such churches, and are, by their own terms, liable to changes as the interest of the church may require from time to time. The desirability of changes in Church Rules is, therefore, a matter of judgment in the churches of a denomination, expressed in a duly authorized general synod or council; while the matter of altering the Forms of Concord is the concern of all Reformed Churches, to be expressed in an international or world synod. Church Rules, being a matter of denominational concern only, and covering, as they do, many matters not found in the Scriptures, or not necessarily deduced therefrom, but being largely subject to the law of Christian Liberties, are applicable only so far as circumstances, and the free consent of local churches, permit. They cannot compel the consciences of believers; and if they cannot, they are not an infallible mark of a Reformed Church, and hence cannot be exalted into a place co-ordinate with the Forms of Concord. The fundamental error of the seceders in Michigan, in 1857, was that they took the Rules of Dort, (which the Fathers of Dort said were of a temporary nature, and "may" and "ought" to be "changed"), and made of them the equivalent of a Form of Concord or a mark of the true church. When a church sings hymns, and conducts Sunday Schools in-

G. GROEN VAN PRINSTERER

stead of catechetical classes, she is not violating the Forms of Concord, but has changed mere Church Orders as the interest of the churches may have required. The Seceders of 1857 therefore seceded, according to their published reasons, on account of the changes made in the Rules of Dort by the authorized General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. And thus Graafschap and the Seceders of 1857 ascribed more real authority to the writings of men than to the Word of God.

In our political life the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land, while the several States of the Union have constitutions, differing greatly from each other, yet in harmony with the Federal Constitution, and, while the many townships and cities have their own laws and police regulations, as various as the number of these municipalities, but all in consonance with the spirit of the State and Federal Constitutions. All these laws are based on the principle of allowing the largest liberty, consistent with the general welfare, to the inhabitants of the States and townships. In Reformed Church life the same principles apply. The Scriptures are the supreme law, and the Confessions or Forms of Concord are like the State constitution, while the Church Orders or Rules are like the local police regulations of townships, villages, and cities. Confessions and Church Rules may vary in many particulars, but may not conflict with the Scriptures. Church Rules may allow the largest liberty to the local churches, provided they do not conflict with the Confession or the Scriptures. This is the underlying principle of the whole Reformation, based on the epistles of Paul. In fact, Church Rules must allow the largest liberty to the local churches, or they are not Reformed and scriptural. At any rate, no township or city ever dreamed of seceding from a State or the Union, when she failed to impose her own police rules on the whole State or Nation. And yet, this would be exactly the equivalent of what the Seceders of 1857 attempted. These seceded largely because they were not

allowed to construe their own "largest liberty" into the destruction of the largest liberty of other churches. Graafschap, according to her own declaration, seceded in 1857, because she was not allowed to dictate her own conception of Church Rules to the rest of the Reformed Church. It was the seceders — not the Reformed Church—who were dictating unreformed rules, and in this fact lies the fundamental error of that Secession. It was as if Holland Township would have seceded after having demanded the acceptance of her police regulations by all the other municipalities of the United States, instead of allowing all other municipalities to make rules of their own in harmony with the State and Federal Constitutions.

The Forms of Concord, while recognizing the work of the great Christian Councils of the first four centuries, which had formulated the doctrines of the trinity, of election, and the like, were drawn so as to distinguish sharply the Reformed Churches from the Romish Church; but these forms were deduced from the Scriptures, and did not reject what was true in the Romish Church, and therefore they contain the confessions of eighteen centuries of painstaking study of the Bible. They are the "slowly ripening fruit of the development of the Christian faith, and the written memorials of the victory of truth over error." They are, as Van Prinsterer called them, "an echo of the testimony of Jesus; they are the memorials of the church militant; unchanging witnesses of the faith delivered to the saints; links of the same chain; mileposts that show the paths trodden before,—not for us to remain standing there, but from which to go forward in the way where God leads," V. P. Het Regt, p. 50. These forms are called the Symbolical Writings of the Church, and they are the "golden thread of agreement" God has shot through the errors of the world lying in sin and darkness. They are the public confession the Church makes before God and men, the kernel of divine truth in the Church. If all doctrines, as Calvin taught, are not of the same importance, there may

be, and are, some differences in the several creeds of the Universal Church; and this fact at once shows the importance of not making essentials out of non-essentials, nor of making salvation to consist in matters left to the liberties of the believer. The real catholicity of the Christian Church, therefore, consists in unity in the broad essentials, without giving an exaggerated importance to things not essential. And this same principle applies necessarily to each denomination or national church.

The Forms of Concord, the standards of doctrine in Reformed Churches, while considered higher than the mere works of man because of the fact that they are so close to the Scriptures, are yet not infallible, and are always subject to the light of the Bible. They are not to be accepted unconditionally or in a narrow sense, but as assistants to human frailty, and as expressing the main truths of the Gospel. They are the means of crystallizing and stabilizing Reformed truth, so as to avoid the danger of a rank subjectivity or individualism, arbitrariness, or "a revolutionary omnipotence of temporary and changing majorities." What is required in the Reformed Church everywhere is the maintenance of those doctrines, which in her history, as exhibited in her Forms of Concord, are the life principles, not necessarily as worked out dogmatically by her "subtle theologians, but rather as God manifests them in the hearts of believers." These Forms are a matter of duty, not of desire, so far as acceptance is concerned; but, as Van Prinsterer said, "there never was in the Netherlands Reformed Church a strictness, bordering on the absurd, which demanded an acceptance in every particular, or none at all." The main principles are the essence, and these are determined, not by the arbitrary mind of everybody or at any particular time, not by enemies, but by the believers, as shown in the Church's history, and her permanent Forms. The Church can exist without Forms, which are born out of the Church; and these exist for the Church, not the Church for the Forms; while the truths

therein are accepted not because they are expressed in the Forms, or believed by others, but because through the centuries God has revealed them to the hearts and consciences of men spiritually enlightened and qualified to give the sense of the Word to the rest of the church. The existence of truth side by side with fundamental error in a church, is always a questionable matter; but to permit such partnership so that it becomes the normal condition of a church, is not permitted in the Reformed Church.

However, error that does not touch the question of salvation is not necessarily error, and during times of disturbance in the Church, this becomes a puzzling question. Almost every secession has led to the disturbance of the equilibrium of doctrines. For example, after the secession of 1834 in old Holland, the Seceders soon became bound to refight, as it were, the fight of 1618, with the Remonstrants, thus over emphasizing the doctrine of predestination at a time when the whole Gospel truth was at stake. The Synod of Dort in 1618 came to the defense of the confession because it was attacked along the lines of election, and hence produced the Canons of Dort. In 1834 and later, the doctrines of the Reformed Church were all attacked. The divinity of Christ, the necessity of satisfaction for sins, the substitutionary suffering of Christ, were all combatted in the State Church, and there were those who claimed that the worship of Christ was idolatry, His death for others was a blood-theology, and the tenet of the infallibility of the apostles apostle worship. In this conflict the Seceders insisted on predestination as the only real mark of orthodoxy; and it is not surprising that this unbalancing of doctrines is attacked by a profound student like Van Prinsterer, who plainly intimates that as long as there is conviction of inability and depravity, of free grace and of the need of renewal by the Spirit, there is no reason to exclude any one from the Reformed Church. Van Prinsterer did not reject the Canons; on the contrary, he said of the Forms of Concord that they taught unequivocally the

unconditional sovereignty of God and the reign of God's free grace, that they showed the real source of humility and thankfulness to be that the origin of salvation was not in our own merits, but in the grace of God. Van Prinsterer evidently felt that the Canons of Dort were a necessary defense in 1618, but that later the Canons were misused, and the doctrine of election magnified into the only doctrine; for he calls the Canons "a dialectic development (uiteenzetting) in which the simple and unlearned believer need not be initiated, a theological treatise (tractaat) which may well remain a closed book for them, without injury, and even to their profit,—Het Regt, etc., p. 59. In his Brochure to Van Velzen, p. 10, Van Prinsterer intimated that for good reasons predestination was the shibboleth in 1618, but that, in 1834, it might well be assigned its subordinate position. He saw the terrible abuse to which the doctrine was subjected as an excuse for sin and inactivity, largely through the emphasis the Canons had given it, even though the Synod of Dort had sounded a suitable warning. Van Prinsterer says, in his *Anti-kritiek,* p. 18, speaking of the necessity of love as well as of hope, "in order that I may not forget that orthodoxy alone amounts to nothing, I quote the trenchant words of Pascal, 'We even make an idol of the truth; for truth without love is not God; it is His image, and an idol which we may neither love nor adore'."

Van Prinsterer, who, in 1837, risked his official position when he attacked the repressive measures of the government against the Seceders, was the greatest investigator of what was Reformed during the nineteenth century. He carefully sifted these matters, and weighed each word, so that he became recognized as an authority by all. He saw that the weakness of the Dutch secession was the worship of doctrine by some, and the worship of the Church Rules by others, and he saw aright that the Seceders were not entirely on Reformed grounds, but were giving free reign to anarchy in the Church, either by rejection of the Forms

and Rules as did Scholte and his adherents, or by overemphasis on doctrines like predestination, or on Church Rules. While neither of those elements were on strictly Reformed grounds, it must be admitted that representatives of both of those elements later in America, carried on in the same way at Pella, Ia., and at Noordeloos and Graafschap, Mich., in 1857.

A Reformed Church is one that accepts the Forms of Concord as a temporary declaration of faith by the Church of Christ, through the centuries, under the leadings of the Holy Spirit. But a church that makes out of these Forms something separate and independent, as if they were detached from the Scriptures, and makes that something the mark of the only true church; and in addition to that, assigns five reasons for seceding from sister churches based entirely on points of mere Church Rules, as Graafschap did in 1857,—whatever she may have been,—was not a Reformed Church, according to the Fathers. She was a church, as some of the discordant elements of the Dutch Seceders after 1834 understood a church, but when she pretended to set up her own manufactory of true church-marks in 1857, regardless of the voice of all Reformed Churches, through three centuries, and made Church Rules the indicia of orthodoxy and regularity, she was off the Reformed track, and was sidetracked in the jungles of Labadism, Independency, State Churchism, and Romanism, and what not!

On the other hand, the Reformed Dutch Church of the East was not influenced, either by the corruptions in the State Church or by the anarchy of doctrine and practice in the seceded churches of Holland; and judging by her Standards, and her life and actions as exhibited in her synodic acts of those times, the Reformed Dutch Church of the East together with the Classis of Holland were the only Reformed Churches in America, while the Seceders at Noordeloos and Graafschap were simply the offshoots of a demoralized secession, in which novelty and inexperience must form a mantle hiding a multitude of ecclesiastical sins.

X. THE SOUL OF THE CHURCH

IT IS NOW important to ascertain whether this Reformed Dutch Church, with such glorious credentials from the heroic Reformation forefathers, lived up to her Standards of Dort amid the changed conditions in the New World. This church existed under the jurisdiction of the Classis of Amsterdam until 1792, but after that date she began her career as an independent part of the Church of Christ. Just why the Protestant churches in America, like the Reformed and Episcopalians, should have felt it necessary, when the Colonies had achieved their independence, to assume a position independent of the mother churches in Europe, while the Roman Catholic Church in America remained connected with Rome, is not clear.

The Fathers of Dort affirmed that the confession and doctrines of a church must be ascertained, not from certain individuals or leaders, often mischievously misquoted, but from the authorized declarations of her lawful assemblies. The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, after the ecclesiastical authorities in Holland had approved the segregation of the American church, and had bidden her Godspeed, became the highest judicature of the Church in America; and it is therefore from the acts of this General Synod that the attitude of the Church on all questions involved, must be obtained. The old Standards of Dort, readopted at the time of disjunction, in 1792, served as the Constitution, and the subsequent action of the General Synod will show whether the fathers of the Dutch Church in the East understood the essentials of Reformed doctrine and practice.

During the immense wave of Unitarianism that swept over America in about 1820, the force of this movement caused some ripples in the Reformed Church, in the form of disputes about the difference between the natural and moral powers of man, and about emphasizing the doctrines of election and of man's responsibility. These disputes resulted in the small secession, considered in other chapters of this work, in which the stand taken by the General Synod appears as being correct and unimpeachable from the standpoint of Dort. Beginning in 1817, the Synod condemned the raging heresies of the day in unmeasured terms, and declared adherence to the Standards of Dort, in part, even in the very words of Dort. Nevertheless the differences of opinion as to preaching Christ promiscuously or restrictedly, etc., came to the surface now and then, so that the Synod, in 1834, Minutes p. 350, said, "Occupying, as we do, a place of happy medium between the extremes of Arminianism, on the one hand, and Antinomianism, on the other, we exalt the name of Jehovah, and humble the pride of human sufficiency, ascribing the individual glory of salvation to the sovereignty and omnipotence of divine grace, while at the same time we maintain the personal and solemn responsibilities of man, press the obligation of the divine law, exhibit the motives to repentance and holy living, absolve the throne of God from all blame, and present the whole charge of transgression at the door of the sinner's heart and conscience."

It is almost impossible to state correct Reformed doctrine on this tremendous problem of predestination and free will more explicitly. But other expressions of the General Synod are as noteworthy. In 1831, referring in a pastoral letter to the cardinal doctrines of the Church, the following words are employed: "lest the great landmarks of faith be removed, and the power of practical and vital godliness be impaired," p. 380. In 1832, p. 45, the state of the church is not "without alloy"; "they rejoice, but with trembling." "The spirit of the age is excitement, and doctrines long embalmed

in the affections of the purest part of Christ's Church on earth are ignored. There is excitement and action without regard to the principles whence they flow. Strong religious excitement is not always evidence of the power of the Divine Spirit," etc. In 1841, Dr. Milledoler, in a report, complains, "The Deistical, the Socinian, the Unitarian, and the Universalist carry the war into the enemy's camp, and shall we alone be on the defensive?" In 1846, p. 73, the doctrines of universal salvation advanced in the books of the school district libraries, and other doctrines equally at war with the Holy Scriptures, are condemned. In 1849, p. 495, "Christian education makes our church as the Garden of Eden * * *. Oh, we have a heritage, a church of the Reformation, as near, we verily believe, as any other church of that glorious era, to the infallible oracles of God, transmitted to us through the piety, the faithfulness, the very martyrdom of our forefathers. 'Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces'." In 1854, after establishing a Board of Publication, and calling the Reformed Dutch Church the oldest and one of the smallest denominations in the country, this Synod speaks of her as follows: "Venerable in her history, pure and Calvinistic in her doctrine, representative in her policy, and harmonious in her operations, she may well claim the united regard of other churches and the world. Linked by association with the Reformed Church of Holland, and the Synod held at Dordrecht in 1618-19, what denomination can claim a more honored ancestry? And what better apostolic succession need we desire than to have a place in a church which has been handed down from those sainted men, who, though dead, still speak? It is no unwarranted egotism, therefore, in us, to say, that we honor, respect, and love that church, which for centuries has stood forth amid the night of error and delusion, as a beacon light to point the inquiring to the way of life, and which, like Gibraltar itself, in the midst of dissensions and defections, which have painfully tried other churches, has always re-

mained true to her Calvinistic history, and unshaken in her support of the distinctive features of the Protestant Reformation."

In 1864, referring to the 300th anniversary of Calvin's death, the General Synod said, "Three centuries have attested the truth of the theological system he promulgated, and the scripturalness of the form of church government he established. The coming centuries will witness increasing multitudes marching under the same banner. He was the father of the public school, and struck the fatal blow at civil and religious tyranny by unfolding to every Christian his full personal rights and duties as a believer."

The above declarations of the General Synod, selected from a mass of similar ones, show conclusively, when considered with the strong and emphatic condemnations, in 1817-24, of the Arminian heresy, and its opposite, Antinomianism, that the General Synod understood the "distinctive features of the Reformation" and of Calvinism. They knew the history of their "Reformed Zion," her doctrines, and correct practice; and succeeding chapters will show, that the Reformed Dutch Church understood her pedigree, her marching orders from Christ, the chief commander, and her duties as a part of the Church Universal, far better than the one-sided insurrectionists who broke away in 1822.

It is true, in such declarations of the Synod, the leaders of the Church spoke. But is not the highest assembly of the church the mouthpiece of the membership of the Church? It is very unsafe to judge the spiritual condition of a church from the statements of a few members, or self-appointed leaders, or from her enemies. If either the western branch of the Reformed Church, or the Christian Reformed Church, is judged by the standard of intelligence of the general run of individual members, there is no danger that wisdom will die with such members. The Reformed Dutch Church must, like other churches, therefore, be

gauged largely by her Standards and Synodical legislation.

It would be useless here to multiply quotations from the General Synod on doctrines and other questions, especially from those of the later sessions. However, an interesting book could be made of the material at hand,—particularly on the subject of Christian Missions; for on that subject the General Synod has been eloquent, sublimely eloquent, since 1830.

Does any one think that Paul, Augustine, Calvin and Kuyper would not gladly have stood on a platform composed of planks so strong, so clear, so scriptural, as those contained in the above and the other utterances of the General Synod of the Reformed Church?

These quotations, though few, are fairly representative of a long line of utterances of a similar nature; and there is running through them all the strongest evidence of the consciousness of the glorious power of her "Calvinistic history" and of the "distinctive features of the Protestant Reformation," to which this Church endeavored to remain true, and to which she tried to give her unshaken support. In these Synod utterances we discover the soul of the Church of the Martyrs.

XI. POLICE RULE OF GOD'S HOUSE

THESE Reformed Church Orders, or Rules of Church Government, about which there was so much strife and confusion among the Hollanders in America sixty years ago and later, were the work of several synods, held from 1568 to 1619, all during the Eighty Years War. Except as changed or superseded, the rules of the preceding synods remained, and the Church in Holland always inserted in its Church Handbook, the Rules adopted in all these synods.

These Rules were not intended as a proposal to be approved later on, or as an absolute obligation placed upon the churches, but were conclusions of the synods to be followed as much as possible in the government of the churches. At Wesel, 1568, during Alva's reign, when the Dutch churches were scattered, and "Sitting under the Cross," the synod met in banishment, and all the churches were not represented. But at Emden, 1571, they had all been consulted. Marnix especially insisted on the Rules as valuable in promoting unity in the churches, and also for their effect on political unity. All the churches co-operated, and the men who composed the synod had been authorized and sent, and in these representatives the churches themselves were in session there. This authorization by the local churches is really the foundation of the power of all these synods.

The Belgic Confession had been adopted by the Reformed Churches in 1565, and the churches were therefore already united by this inner bond of union, upon which the outer band was naturally based. Articles 27-32 of the Confession, referring to the nature of the Church Universal, the marks of the true and the false

church, the necessity of joining the true church and to the nature of Church government, were generally accepted. And it was therefore agreed that there was no church government except that based and dependent on the Scriptures. Within this limitation, and therefore with Christ as its only Head, *all power was in the churches themselves, exercised by the local consistory,* and all pastors and their churches were on an equality with others, in power and authority; all believers were members of the Universal Church, and therefore obliged, as much as possible, by their acts of union, to develop the unity of the Universal Church. The right to make church rules (Kerkorde), it is evident, was therefore, also vested in the *local consistory,* within the limits set by the Bible, and therefore also with the duty of conforming as much as necessary, in the use of the rules, with other churches, in order to accentuate the unity of the Church of Christ. The Emden Synod assumed no powers of its own, but it made rules for the government of the churches, because all the churches (every local church) brought their powers together, so that the rules were made by those who had been duly authorized by each local church. The Rules were valid just because the churches had made them for themselves.

The other synods followed with similar powers, and those synods did not establish a large national church, in which the local churches had been merged and lost, with a General Synod as supreme with a new power of its own. On the contrary, these same local churches, through the action of their consistories, were actually present, and gave the synods their only powers. The correctness of this position must be conceded, for it involves the correctness of the underlying principles of the whole Reformation. The conferring of other powers on the synods would have created a new pope. This accounts for the strictness with which credentials of synod members were scrutinized; these credentials contained the statement that the representatives were given authority (last en volmacht) to represent the

churches sending them, so that the synod was not a body of men like a local consistory, but a gathering of churches, as if all these (and each one of them), were themselves present. The presence of elders was strenuously insisted on, because they were nearest to the local churches. Because the local churches, who alone could authorize union with other local churches, were present, the synod could make and alter church rules. No other right was consistent with Reformation principles. The local churches were the center of all power, and the basic rule — Art. 36 of the Dort Church Rules—recognizes the difference between consistorial and synodical powers, when it says that the general synod has the same jurisdiction over a particular synod, which the latter has over a classis, and the classis has over a consistory. The deliberate omission of reference to the powers of the consistory over a local church in said Art. 36, shows that the jurisdiction of a consistory is of an entirely different nature—a nature which was the very soul of the whole Reformation, of the Netherlands Confession, and of the history of the Reformed Churches. To get rid of the big book of church laws of the Romish Church, and of the lordship of bishops and cardinals and popes and councils, and to restore direct access to the Scriptures, was the object of the Reformation. To restore the pure liberty of the individual believer given him by Christ, and to restore the liberties of the local churches from the bondage of an oppressive hierarchy and the mass of Church Rules was the work of the Reformers. And to constitute a general synod or classis, supreme in ecclesiastical matters, would have been the substitution of one pope for another. Synods and Classis have no jurisdiction whatever except that freely conferred by independent local churches for common purposes.

The above facts have been gathered from a little work by Prof. F. L. Rutgers, of the Free University of Amsterdam, entitled, "De Geldigheid van de Oude Kerkenordening," written in 1889, during the Dole-

antie movement in the Netherlands. Rutgers, the colleague of Profs. Kuyper and Hoedemaker, based his book on the writings of Reformed Fathers, beginning with the Synod of Wesel. He also quotes, not from Voetius, but from a younger contemporary of Voetius, Prof. Hoornbeek of Leyden, the following just remarks on the relation of local churches and synods:

"The word dependence (dependentie) cannot be used to describe the relation of local churches to synods. For it must not be thought that the particular local church derives its power from a higher body, whether church or synod, or that a local church, in coming into a synod, resigns its power in favor of the synod. Such is not the case. The usage or powers of synods cannot, and must not, in any way do violence to the freedom and powers of local churches; the power of synods has not a depriving but a uniting character, and every local church remains in its independent possession of complete ecclesiastical power. Synods do not, moreover, assume mandatory (verbiedende) powers over the churches composing them, like superior public officers have over their inferiors, but a synod, resulting from the united and free agreement of the churches, has a power conferred on it by the local churches, which is of a serving, helping nature, while said churches submit themselves willingly, because good order and edification demand it.

"This relation of churches can therefore not be called 'dependent,' and in relation to the sect referred to (Brownists), the word Independentism is not appropriate, for, in a better sense, it may be said that a particular church is independent of another like church, or of synods, or of men, but that she is dependent upon Christ. The proper word is really 'submission,' because it is the result of the common consent to submit, in order to promote the edification and welfare of the Church. When a synod acquires jurisdiction over churches, these churches are not changed; present at the synod by their representatives, they are the same local churches, which submit their common

concerns to the synod, in every respect by a voluntary and reciprocal submission. The synod, moreover, does not put its sickle into a strange grainfield (vreemd korenveld) ; but by means of synods the united powers of the churches watch over, and provide jointly for the welfare of those same churches."

The Rules made by the several synods all contained provisions for amendment and alteration. The last article of the Rules of Dort states that "these articles have been adopted by common consent (gemeen accoord) in such manner, that if the interest (profijt) of the church should require it, they may be, and ought to be altered, enlarged or diminished." The reason such changes were required to be made not by a lower body or by one church, but by a general or national synod, is that these rules, subject to the Scriptural Liberties, were made to be used by all the churches as much as possible, that is to say by each local church and by all of them. When a local church or a classis undertakes to change these rules, the other churches in the denomination are not represented, and cannot therefore be bound. All the churches can be bound only when present, and that is only possible in a general or national synod.

Of course these Rules were binding not only on those who made them, but also on those who later accepted them, either by express declaration or act of joining. If a church did not assist, accept, or join, or adopted a radically different and antagonistic set of Church Rules, it was outside the organization, and it violated the fundamental duty of giving expression to the oneness of the Church of Christ, as much as was in its power, when it assumed a standpoint so different from that of other churches.

The adoption of the Rules of Church Government by the Reformed Church in the Netherlands during the revolt from the Rules of Rome and the despotism of Spain, aroused the intense jealousy of the people who were then going through great tribulation to free themselves from the yoke of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny;

and to allay this feeling, and to silence criticism, the fathers at the time the Synod of Wesel added to their Rules a Voorreden (Introduction to the Christian Reader) which explains fully the necessity of such rules by copious references to the history of the Christian Church, and to the synods and councils; but they were careful to make the distinction between the Roman Catholic Church laws and their own simple Church Rules very plain. This Voorreden of about 25 pages says that civil governments punish offenders, sometimes with the death penalty, while churches inflict as their extreme penalty, in cases of offenses, only excommunication, which, as in Matt. 18:17, is simply holding the offender as "a heathen man and a publican"; that Christ left His Word as a guide and rule for His Church to live by without lordship over others; that rules, however, are necessary to pure doctrine and to regulate church services, to keep good order and to prevent "divisions and offenses," Rom. 16 (verwarringen en ergernissen); that the churches noticed early that many features of the sacraments, etc., were not prescribed in the Scriptures, but that the peace and edification of believers required decisions, so that synods were from time to time called, and later periodically, mainly to prevent schisms and false doctrine; that the Apostles who could not err held several such meetings, and that it is more necessary to have such meetings now when there are no such inspired men to pass on matters on which the Bible is silent; that many questions not explained in the Scriptures require some uniform rule of action, so as to prevent divisions, and that synods and classis are therefore necessary, I Cor. 14:40, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' and Phil. 4:8, 'Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, think on these things.'

"Concerning the rules," the Voorreden continue, "made by churches, and for which there is no command in the Scriptures, the Reformed Church has, so far, taught that since Christ has released Christians from the yoke of ecclesiastical ceremonies, consisting of dif-

ference in meats, observance of feast days, etc., no one can impose another yoke upon them. Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day [feest-day], or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days, Col. 2:16, since they in things indifferent have received freedom of Christ, and religion does not consist thereof, I Cor. 8:8. It is also well-known (kennelijk) that the Reformed Church has always opposed popery, which teaches that the consciences of men are bound by the commands of the church as well as by those of God, that the church's orders are as essential to salvation as God's commands, and that religion consists in obeying the church institutions as well as in keeping God's laws. The Reformed Church has proved out of the Scriptures, and maintained that no church enactments (inzettingen) can bind men's consciences except God's laws, that no church laws are essential to salvation, and that no holiness or piety can be found in them, nor must be sought therein; but that rules are considered necessary for the public services conducted in churches, and for the government of the visible church, and to prevent divisions and offenses, so that all things may be done decently and in order; *in this way,* that when any one violates a church law, without committing or intending an offense or division, while he has observed the inner service commanded in the first table of the law, the Reformed Church holds that he has not defiled his conscience, for he did not sin against the object of the law; which is to prevent divisions and offenses in the outward religious service. What reason is there, then, for criticism of the Reformed Churches?"

This Introduction written by the Fathers of the Synod of Wesel has been published with the Rules adopted by every succeeding synod, including that of Dort, and has always been considered binding by the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. This latitude in things indifferent is rather striking, for these synods often reversed the decisions of other synods, e. g., two of the synods forbade the use of organs in church services,

while the Synod of Dort did not forbid; the synod of 1574 forbade feast days, while Dort approved them. These changes, as we know, were due to actual conditions in the churches at these particular times, showing that the fathers were not afraid to change the Rules when circumstances demanded it. The Rules were intended to assist the Confession in giving expression to the unity of the Church, and being designed for the external life of the churches, were, particularly "in things indifferent," or in matters not specifically prescribed in the Bible, a matter of compromise, and hence, too, often deviations from the rules were allowed in the Dutch churches, since sometimes, by deviating, a greater error or detriment could be avoided than by adhering to the rules, and the rule finally became, in such cases, 'What is heaviest, must weigh the heaviest' (Wat het zwaarste was, moest ook het zwaarste wegen). Of course, the Rules were based on unity of doctrine, and without this inner bond of unity all rules would have been useless. Such unity of doctrine must be based on the Infallible Word, and hence an appeal from the Rules, and even from the Confession, was and is always in order. If this were not so, Church Rules and Confessions written and made by men, instead of God's Word, would be the supreme law in the Church, which is Roman Catholic, not Reformed, doctrine.

The current belief that the Synod of Dort (1618-19) intended to make Church Rules, just like a Form of Concord, for all the churches represented in that Synod, from the Continent and Great Britain, is erroneous; for that Synod never began the consideration of Church Rules until the 13th day of May, 1619, when the foreign delegates had already withdrawn. It was therefore only as the National Synod for the Churches of Holland that this Synod adopted, on May 28, 1619, the eighty-six articles known as the "Rules of Dort."

Since the beginning of the Reformation in Holland, and in spite of the Rules adopted by the different synods since Wesel, there were several different sets of

Rules in use in the Netherland Churches, and this fact was adverted to by Dort, with the admission that these different sets of Rules were nevertheless largely similar to Dort's own new Rules, especially "where principles were involved." But Dort, for the sake of obtaining greater uniformity, in an Address to the States General, requested the general application of her Rules in all the Churches of the Netherlands, and made liberal use of such terms as "approve," "confirm," "sanction," "strengthen," "authorize," "to maintain them [the new Rules] as far as possible" (Zoo veel zulks geschieden kan), and "so that they may have, in the churches, the powers of a public statute."

This approval, etc., so fondly desired by the Synod of Dort, was given by the States of Overijsel, without conditions, by the States of Gelderland and Utrecht, with unimportant reservations, but never by any of the other provinces or by the States General. However, the Rules in the Dutch churches were so similar to those of Dort, and Dort in her Post-Acta, adopted in sessions 155-180, May 13 to May 29, 1619, further so explained and modified the application of her new Rules to the circumstances in other churches, that in course of time the expression "Church Orders of Dort" expressed very well the general "spirit and tendency of the Fathers" in Holland. There was considerable contention about Rules in the Netherlands, until the French Revolution and conquest of Holland, brought in an entirely new system. But in 1792, when, a few years before the loss of Holland's independence, the American Dutch Churches became independent, the situation was as above indicated,—several different sets of Rules in use with the Rules of Dort as general landmarks only in the whole body of the Reformed system of Church government.

The Reformed churches in New York and New Jersey, planted in about 1620, were a part of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, and had the same Standards of Faith, and the same Rules of government, till they finally, in 1792, became independent. All of

the officers and pastors of these churches had the same Church Handbooks in the same language, as the officers and pastors in the Netherlands. In fact, without exception, all the ministers in the New York and Jersey Churches read and spoke the Dutch language. Almost without exception they preached in the Dutch language as late as 1810. These churches were the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, as much as any church in old Holland. The religious literature of these churches was that of Holland, and the glorious history of the Martyr Church was their possession; its theology was theirs—only the Atlantic lay between. When, in 1792, these Churches became independent of the Church in Holland, and it was felt that the English language would prevail, they re-adopted, and translated into English, the Standards and Rules of Dort. In the preface to their Handbook, called the Constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church, we find at the beginning the following characteristic phrase: "The unerring Word of God remaining the only standard of Faith and Worship of His people." In that preface are the further statements that this Constitution contains the Doctrines, Mode of Worship, and Government of the Reformed Dutch Church in America, and that these are as follows: (1) The doctrines comprised in the Articles of Faith, the Catechism and Compendium, and her Canons; (2) The Mode of Worship is in general terms prescribed in the Liturgy; and, (3) "The government and discipline are contained in the Rules of Church Government, ratified in the last National Synod held at Dordrecht; these are illustrated in the Explanatory Articles, and applied to the circumstances and local situation of the Church. Whatever relates to the immediate authority and interposition of the Magistrate in the government of the church, more or less introduced into European churches, is entirely omitted in this Constitution."

The Preface to the Explanatory Articles adopted by the Reformed Church in America, in 1792, reflects the prevailing system of the Churches of Dort, as the fol-

lowing quotations completely show: "The Rules of Dort, which express the general principles of ecclesiastical government adopted by all Reformed Churches [in the Netherlands], were by the delegates of the United Netherlands, explained and more fully applied to their local circumstances, in certain acts which were styled the Post-Acta Synodi Nationalis." The Reformed Church in America "have always applied (Discipline, etc.) in the same way, so far as their number and circumstances would permit, as was declared in 1771." "Therefore the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church in America, held at New York in Oct., 1792, have caused the practice of their church to be comprised in the following Explanatory Article [73 in number], agreeably to which, the Rules of Church Government of said National Synod of Dordrecht, are applied and executed." At the conclusion of these Explanatory Articles, the committee, consisting of Revs. Solomon Fraeligh, Basset, and Stryker, declared that "these articles contain the principal outlines of the practice of their Church, agreeably to which the ecclesiastical ordinances of the National Synod held at Dordrecht in the years 1618 and 1619, and which were solemnly and formally recognized and adopted at the convention held in New York in the year 1771, are proceeded upon and executed." The same committee says, "these articles are also to be considered subject to such additional explanations and alterations as shall be found necessary to throw light upon any article of Dort, or to remove any doubt or difficulty."

This does not show any "unconditional acceptance of the Rules of Dort," either in the Netherlands before 1792, or in the American Reformed Churches before or after said date. The idea of the "unconditional acceptance of the Rules of Dort" is a myth invented years later among the Hollanders in Michigan.

The fathers in New York and New Jersey at once used the liberty Christ gave them, in the sense the fathers of Dort intended it to be used, when they concluded that whenever the interest of the churches re-

quired it, they *ought* to change the Rules. And they did.

During 1795-1813, the Church in Holland was almost ruined by the beneficence of Napoleon and the Age of Reason, and when Holland regained its independence, King William, in 1816 with good intention, no doubt, with one stroke of the pen, imposed on the Dutch church a body of Rules made by his cabinet. The church, therefore, got Rules made by King William instead of by themselves. A synod appointed by the King was imposed upon them without consulting them, so that a hierarchy took the place of Dort. William came back from Germany and England, and tried to episcopalize the Churches, thus tearing up by the roots the autonomy of local churches, the derivative powers of synods, and the liberty of the New Testament churches. The Churches received Rules not made by themselves, but by the Government, and these Rules were now fully elevated into the position of public laws of the State. This made the Church a State machine, and the clergymen practically State officers. These brand-new Rules forbade correspondence with foreign churches without the consent of the king. They required the appointment of the first synod by the king, declared that no resolutions were valid without the king's approval, and required that the meetings of the synod be attended by the Minister of Public Worship, or by civil commissioners. With this man-made code, and this nationalized Church, in which every body, rationalists and atheists included, had a share, it soon became apparent that a radical departure from the heroic Church of the Fatherland had been initiated. The very first synod called in 1816, responded to the liberals. The old Formula adopted by the churches of Dort bound clergymen to the venerable Forms of Concord as follows: "We testify that the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Confession of the Netherlands Church, as also the Canons of the National Synod of Dordrecht, held in the years 1618 and 1619, "are fully conformable to the Word of God" (in alles met God's Woord overeenkomen), * * * "and will teach

and defend the doctrines" * * * "established in the Standards aforesaid." The new Synod of 1816 changed this Formula to read as follows: "That we in good faith and heartily believe the doctrines, which in conformity with God's Holy Word, are contained in the accepted Forms of Concord of the Netherlands Reformed Church" (Dat wij de leer, welke overeenkomstig Gods Heilig Woord in de aangenomen formulieren van Eenigheid der Ned. Herv. Kerk is vervat, ter goeder trouw aannemen en hartelijk gelooven). Under this changed phraseology, ambiguous to some extent, the liberals held the old Forms of Concord no longer binding *because* they were "fully conformable" to the Word of God, but *in so far as* they were in conformity with the Word. This difference led to a great controversy in the Churches of Holland, known as the Quia and Quatenus Question. The word quia, applied to the Forms meant *because* they were in conformity, while the word quatenus meant *in so far as* they are in conformity with the Word. The orthodox party sought to maintain Quia, while the liberals at once made use of the Quatenus, as developments showed.

This unfortunate change, it is evident, freed clergymen from adhering to the Scriptures as reflected in the Creed of the church, and opened the way for their rationalistic Bible interpretation to explain the Creed. The government, non-sectarian and non-religious, responded to the liberalism of the French Revolution, and the State Church did likewise, until in 1834, after years of agitation, the orthodox people broke out in open secession, and raised against the Standards of Dort. After much strife the secessionists re-adopted, in 1840, the old Church Rules, Voorreden and all, in the sense of the Martyr Churches. When Dr. Van Raalte and his colonists went to America six years later, they brought with them the same Rules, and when organized church life was resumed by these few scattered Dutch churches in western Michigan, at their first Classis Meeting, April, 1848, they adopted the old

Standards of the Netherlands Churches and the Rules of Church Government from Wesel to Dort, even quoting in full the last two pages of the Voorreden of the Fathers of Wesel, showing that church rules are designed not to be worshipped, but to be used, and changed as the interest of the churches may require.

The brethren of the Reformed Church in the East had in 1792, adopted, or rather re-declared, the same Standards and the same Church Rules, and in the same spirit of the Fathers of Wesel, as the changes they made by their Explanatory Articles prove. In fact the Reformed churches of New York and Jersey were about the only churches in the world from 1795 till 1834, that preserved the Standards and Rules of Dort. Art. 32 of the Confession, be it remembered, recognizes the right of rulers of the church to "institute and establish certain ordinances [Church Rules] among themselves for maintaining the body of the church; yet [warns that] they ought studiously to take care, that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only Master, hath instituted." It proceeds to say—"And therefore we reject all human inventions, and all laws, which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience, in any manner whatever. Therefore we admit only of that, which tends to nourish and preserve concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God. For this purpose, excommunication or church discipline is requisite, with the several circumstances belonging to it according to the Word of God."

With such a provision in the Reformed Confession itself, the appeal is *always* to the Scriptures, in all things including Confessions and Rules; so that in matters of religious instruction, in the use of the sacraments and the like, there is considerable latitude as to means and details, in order that the conscience may not be bound and compelled "in any manner whatsoever." This is the grand doctrine of Dort, of Calvin, and of the early Christian Church alike. In fact, Cal-

vin says that certain features of church government were "introduced by human agreement on account of the necessity of the times," and "by custom rather than by appointment of the Lord," Institutes Vol. 2, p. 273. In his tenth chapter of said volume he explains these church rules fully, and says that some of those laws are based upon, and deduced from the Scriptures, while the others are for edification, suited to circumstances and times as required, with the right to change or abolish or to make new ones, not rashly, frequently or for trivial causes; they are not fixed and perpetual, but only external aids to human infirmity; these laws must be judged by their objects, which are sometimes temporary; they may not bind believers when they impose as necessary things which are indifferent and left free by God, and it is grievous error to despise, condemn, and reject another on account of things left free by the Lord, and to claim them necessary to salvation and essential to piety. Calvin also says such man-made rules ought not to be violated, because not divine, but that the customs and laws of a country, the dictates of modesty, and decorum will lead the way. The believer retains the liberty given by Christ, but he must voluntarily put some restraint on his liberty for the sake of decorum and charity, decency and order, and endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

It is necessary to state here, that the Seceders from the Reformed Church in 1822, were not so wrong in their conception of Church Rules as the Seceders in Michigan were. The Synod of the True Reformed Dutch Church, or what was left of it, in 1828, showed Minutes p. 14, with as fine a contempt for the rules of rhetoric as for the strict construction of Church Rules, that it was nearly right when it spoke as follows: "It was the object of the Synod [of Dort] by the adoption of the rules to preserve uniformity in the discipline and government of the Netherlands churches, as far as possible—as far as the condition of these churches, in their respective provinces would allow,

and therefore to serve as a general landmark by which to abide; also as the National Synod, in their Post Acta, did point out, in several articles, or instances, the accommodation of these general rules to particular localities and cases; and the convention of 1792 in this country did on the same principle, and with the same views explain in a number of Articles, the application of these rules to the situation and wants of the Reformed Dutch Church in North America."

On p. 12 of the same minutes of 1828, the True Reformed Dutch Church criticized the Synod of Dort for admitting a profane mixture of Church and State, the power of the magistrate, etc., and they say, "also admitted into their constitution the 'Jus Patronatus,' or the right of the patron (patroon) to present a minister to a living in his gift as Lord of the Wyck; to which, omitting a few other things, may be added Feest or Holydays, which, although observed without scriptural authority, however, by some of the early Christians, were corrupted by popery and can only be considered as inventions of man, and a species of idolatry."

It is singular that the Seceders of 1822 ignored the fact that this mixture of church and state was really forced on the Synod by the States General and much against her wishes. But what is more singular still, is that, while the remnant of these Eastern Seceders were nearly correct as to the scope of church rules, and considered feast days as a species of idolatry, the Western Seceders of 1857 committed idolatry as to both church rules and feast days, while following the Eastern Seceders in claims of purity of doctrine only. The Western Seceders in 1857 were really ignorant as to the history of the True Dutch, or Secession, Church in the East, except as to what appeared in the addresses of 1822 and 1824.

The Seceders of 1834, in the Netherlands, in their Synod at Utrecht, in 1837, prepared and adopted new church rules. But these rules were rejected by many, and the whole secession church got into the greatest disorder; so that in 1840, they re-adopted the Rules

of Dort with the Rules of preceding synods, as already stated, with the Preface of Wesel included. The introduction to the Rules of 1840, written by Van Raalte, Van Velzen, and Brummelkamp, tells us that they rejected the "Jus Patronatus" entirely, and that there was to be "no power in the government of the churches except in the sense of the Fathers." It states also that the Rules of Dort had been re-adopted to present "another Babel." But alas! the Seceders in old Holland were not willing to accept even the Rules of the Fathers of Dort, and instead of preventing a new Babel, the return to Dort in 1840 precipitated a struggle which lasted for decades, and which in 1852 started to disrupt also the Holland churches in Michigan. This inability to agree on the police rules of God's house in the Netherlands, where every man did what was right in his own eyes, and demanded that every one else should do as he did, was the curse of the secession in old Holland, and also in America. "For O, we can tear, but we cannot heal," said the introduction to the Rules of 1840,—"that is His work."

Of course, as developments in Holland after 1816 showed, these Rules are of the greatest importance. The use of a term so equivocal as to mean either *because* or *in so far as*, raised a commotion so powerful, that some of the Seceders in Holland concluded that the Rules of Dort as written in 1619 were sacred and unchangeable, and that alterations were heresy. This fear became so fixed that when some of these same Seceders came to America, they failed to see the necessity of submitting to changes from 1619, which the Reformed Dutch had found it necessary to make, even though Dort itself had specifically provided for such changes. These Seceders in America refused to bow to the necessity of making salutary changes involved in what is called Americanization. They actually demanded in 1869 unconditional acceptance, not of the Rules of Dort, but of the Rules of Dort as written in 1619, without changes. So great was the misconception among the Seceders in Michigan in 1857 and later,

that the only bond of unity which made possible the "Church of the Fatherland," during the Eighty Years War, the grand basic idea of the whole Reformation, expressed in the Voorreden of Wesel, without which there would have been no united Reformed Church of Holland, was ignored, and in its place was put the illegal un-Reformed principle of demanding obedience to the Rules of 1619, in violation of the whole spirit of Dort. In the secession of 1857, almost the whole doctrine of the "interest of the churches" (het profijt der Kerken), was sacrificed.

What did Brummelkamp, Van Velzen, Van Raalte, and the Seceder Synod of 1840, in the Netherlands, mean when they re-adopted the Rules of Dort as "the only rule of government, discipline and worship in the Churches, and, besides these, all the Rules of preceding synods "tot opheldering," except that this "opheldering" meant the explanation and clarification of the spirit of the Dort Rules supplied by the Rules of Preceding Synods? And is this not plain, when we consider that the last article of the Dort Rules said that these rules "may and ought to be changed" as the interest of the churches may demand, and that this same Synod of 1840 re-enacted bodily the Preface of Wesel, which said that no holiness or piety can be found nor must be sought for in such Rules? They certainly intended to say that the whole Handbook contained the body of Reformed Church Rules, with changes and variations allowable from time to time as deemed necessary by duly constituted and authorized synods, as was fully shown in the history of the Reformed Churches of Dort. The Rules of Dort of 1619 were therefore the general landmarks only, and never did the Church in Holland or any Reformed Synod hold the Rules of Dort as inviolable or unchangeable for all time. This same Synod of 1840, while it revoked the Utrecht Rule of 1837, said, "Let no one think that with these Dort Rules we impose a yoke upon the churches. No! We desire to show that our only object is to approach as near as possible the government, discipline, and service our

forefathers established," and "in the spirit and tendency of the Fathers."

What the spirit and tendency of the Fathers was is shown by the changes they made in Church Rules from Wesel to Dort—six or seven different sets of Rules in forty years, by the deviations permitted, and by the right to change or annul or to make new ones always reserved in the last Rule for succeeding synods. The Classis of Holland, Mich., in 1848, adopted the Handbook of 1840 as containing the "whole body of Reformed Church government," including the Preface of Wesel, "in the spirit and tendency of the Fathers."

XII. REBELLION IN CAMP, OR THE SECESSION OF 1822

1. Rev. Conrad Ten Eyck and His Critics

IT SEEMS that in religion as in physics there is a law that action and reaction are equal and opposite in direction, and by one of those return swings of the pendulum, a hundred years ago, rationalism had swept Puritanism almost off its feet. All the doctrines precious to the Reformed churches were attacked so fiercely, that the General Synod in 1817, thoroughly alarmed by the opening of the floodgates of liberalism in New England and New York City, and by the breaking-down of the Calvinistic strongholds there, by means of resolutions and a pastoral letter, declared war against the growing ecclesiastical anarchy and heresy. Part of this pastoral letter reads, "Socinianism, denying the Lord that bought his church with his atoning blood, like smoke out of a bottomless pit, already darkens certain sections of our country. Besides those doctrines, so congenial with the pride of our depraved nature, which have long been known by the name of Arminianism, which instead of humbling man as guilty before his God, foster his pride and exalt his nature above measure, the synod cannot forebear lifting up a warning voice against other errors, such as the heresy of Antinomianism, which absolves the sinner from all obligation to the law of God as a rule of life, and doctrines of a more specious and insidious cast. The advocates of these dangerous principles level their weapons against those ramparts, those strongholds, which are called creeds and standards of the doctrines of grace, which are so important to the mainte-

nance of unity in the faith, and the preservation of pure and undefiled religion. These they reject or explain away, by perverting their plain literal meaning. Not satisfied with ancient received doctrines, they pretend to progressive improvement in the science of salvation as taught in our churches. They deny the total corruption of our nature—the imputation of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness; they plead for an atonement which is indefinite in its objects and limited only in its application. In a word, they unhinge the precious doctrines of the Reformation, and open the floodgates of error, which, like an overwhelming torrent, is in its tendency calculated to sweep away the very foundations of evangelical truth. And all this under the mask of a name which is not theirs. They are not Calvinists." Minutes 1817, p. 49.

At about this time, Channing and Dewey were leading the Harvard Unitarian Movement, and the reaction swept along the Hudson and the Mohawk, and from New York struck the Hackensack and Raritan valleys in giant waves. The Reformed churches clustering along these rivers were right in the path of the storm. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon those strongholds of Reformation doctrine, and they fell not, for they were founded upon a rock. Some of the rank and file of the Dutch Church may have wavered a little, but the Synod and the Classis and ministers really all stood firm. These Scotch Presbyterians, French Huguenots, and stolid Dutchmen held high His Royal Banner, and kept floating the flag of the Reformation over all the churches from Long Island to Owasco, and from the Raritan to Schagticoke far in the North. Even the churches in New York City withstood the shock, though they were in the very storm center.

The rise of Methodism under the Wesleys and the crusade of the Calvinist Whitfield, with their reactions against dead orthodoxy or formalism, also had their effect on the Dutch churches, where, it must be insisted, there was a strong tendency to Antinomianism. This

effect of the conflict between the too rigid orthodoxy and the active exercise of Christian service of the Wesleys showed itself first in the Classis of Montgomery; and matters came to a head when Rev. Conrad Ten Eyck of the Owasco and Sand Beach Reformed churches wrote a pamphlet on the subject of the Atonement. Rev. Ten Eyck was an energetic worker in the Vineyard of the Lord. In 1816 an awakening in his churches added 351 members on confession, and he himself says, "For four weeks there was nothing attended to in my house of a worldly nature but what was absolutely necessary to keep body and soul together." He preached in and out of season, held catechetical classes in the schoolhouses of his parish, using the Hellenbroek Catechism as a textbook. Ten Eyck's pamphlet precipitated a struggle in the Reformed Church between those who insisted on emphasizing the doctrine of predestination, with election and rejection, on one side, and those who believed in offering the gospel message indiscriminately to all.

In 1819, Ten Eyck was accused by a few members of the Owasco Church of preaching a free and unlimited atonement, which, it was alleged, he claimed as scriptural and in accordance with the standards of the Reformed Church. The Classis of Montgomery, by a vote of 11 to 6, after much consideration, held that the nature of the difference on the subject was not of such import as ought to disrupt the fellowship of Christian brethren and destroy the harmony of churches. The matter was appealed to the Particular Synod of Albany, April, 1820, which held Ten Eyck's doctrine contrary to the Word of God and the church standards, and referred the matter back to the Classis, which was a divided body, of which the majority had held him "not essentially wrong." Ten Eyck now made the following statement, "Although I believe the atonement of Christ to be an expedient devised by infinite wisdom, and fully efficient as to its merits to save the whole human race, did it comport with the will of God;

still I believe that not one of the human family will be savingly benefited by the atonement but those who were given to the Son from all eternity. I as firmly believe that there is an election of grace, and that they only will be saved, and none but those, as I believe any other truth in the Bible. I believe also that not one of the non-elect does perish in consequence of any defect in the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, or of any want of sincerity of God in the offer, but wholly on account of their obstinate rejection of the mercy offered. Hence I believe that the perfect sacrifice of Christ is the grand foundation upon which the offer of salvation is indiscriminately made to all, wherever the Gospel comes; the application of its benefits to the hearts and consciences of sinners is the sovereign act of God." This satisfied the Classis and Part. Synod, although the latter found many expressions in Ten Eyck's defense "loose and equivocal," and recommended him to be "more cautious and circumspect in the use of language on that important subject."

In October 1820, at a special session at Albany, the General Synod considered the matter on appeal, and condemned the pamphet of Ten Eyck and submitted to him a series of questions. His answers, in which he quoted Witsius, were finally considered satisfactory. The committee, of which, be it remembered, Dr. Solomon Fraeligh was chairman, declared, the Synod having condemned Ten Eyck's opinion on the atonement as contained in his printed defense [pamphlet], that "he had acted inadvisedly and imprudently in publishing and circulating said defense, and has merited, and does hereby receive, the reproof of this house." It was also enjoined upon Mr. Ten Eyck henceforth to declare himself on the subject of the atonement conformably to the views expressed by the General Synod.

Meanwhile, Revs. Nicholas Jones and Albert Amerman, who were part of the minority of the Montgomery Classis, had taken the law into their own hands and rebelled. They refused to answer questions,

brought no elders with them, and ignored the Classis. Jones said he did "not consider those who voted in favor of Ten Eyck's defense as members of the Classis of Montgomery, and that he could not recognize them as Christian brethren; that he could not sing with them, pray with them, nor preach with them; that he did not worship the same God they worshipped." Amerman said, when called upon to answer for his delinquency and insubordination, that he "could not in conscience sit with them and recognize them as Christian brethren, that he viewed them as Arminians, and holding damnable doctrines; that were he cut off by the Classis, that act of Classis would only sanction his own act."

The Classis after "due deliberation and prayer to God for direction," suspended both Jones and Amerman from the exercise of the ministerial functions for "contumacy manifested at this time, and for insubordination to the authority of the Classis, until they make satisfaction to that body." The Part. Synod on appeal, recognizing the disorganizing and ruinous tendency of the suspended ministers' insubordinate acts, held the grounds of appeal "as untenable, and subversive of all regular church order, government and discipline," and sustained the suspension. In October, 1820, before the General Synod, Jones and Amerman claimed that the Montgomery Classis had so impaired its standing by an open avowal of heresy that their insubordination was justifiable, and that it could not therefore discipline them. The General Synod, however, affirmed the suspension, declaring that the suspension was founded by the Classis of Montgomery on the defendants' "denial of the authority of said Classis, and on their withdrawal from its jurisdiction." The brethren were directed to return to the Classis, and make amends. Rev. Henry V. Wyckoff had also been suspended for "contumacy and contempt" in the same connection. He was a brother of the noted Rev. Isaac Newton Wyckoff, later well known among the Hollanders of Michigan. Drs. Milledoler, Fraeligh, Can-

non, I. N. Wyckoff, Cornelius Demarest, Labagh and Cuyler were present at this session of General Synod and voted for the above suspensions as good church law, although a few claimed that Ten Eyck merited more than reproof for propagating error, and for not disavowing clearly the errors on the atonement mentioned in his printed defense.

At the same session, Revs. Toll, Wyckoff, Jones, Palmer and Amerman petitioned for reinstatement and their organization into a new Classis. They confessed deviation from ecclesiastical order in their conscientious opposition to Ten Eyck. The request was granted subject to their acknowledgment of deviation from order and their making amends, and to desisting from preaching until permission is given. This action seems to show an effort at compromising their differences; but in the same session it appears that Rev. Silvanus Palmer had declared he hoped the day was not far off when our standards will be subservient to the Word of God,"—for which he refused to apologize. His seat was declared vacant (the seat of Rev. Spinner, who was called away on the fourth day of session), and he was ordered under discipline for "persevering contempt of the standards of this church."

The minutes of the Synod of October 1820, contain the story as given above, but the leaning of the suspended brethren toward Independency will appear later on.

Rev. Ten Eyck, in his ministerial work, relied on Art. V, Second Head, Canons of Dort, "Moreover, the promise of this gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel." Also on Art. V, First Head, "The Cause or guilt of his unbelief, as well as of all other sins, is no wise in God, but in man himself; whereas faith in Jesus Christ, and salvation through

him is the free gift of God." Ten Eyck labored to place the responsibility on man in preaching the gospel to the world, and no doubt, he was right. He evidently considered the doctrine of election "never intended as a revelation to the unconverted, but as Christ's private message to the saints, for the instruction and edification of God's people. Let others leave it alone lest they misconstrue it to their injury." This is a quotation from "Exposition of Reformed Doctrine" by Rev. Bosma of the Christian Reformed Church, and if it is good doctrine in that church now in Michigan, it certainly should not have caused a secession in Ten Eyck's time. The crux of the whole question was: Shall the gospel be offered promiscuously to all, or shall the doctrine of election be emphasized, and the responsibility placed on God? Rev. Ten Eyck may safely be considered more nearly right than his opponents; and, no doubt, the matter would have been dropped but for a dispute of a century's standing elsewhere. The ministers suspended in 1820 were strongly imbued with the spirit of independency, and until the fall of 1822, were giving their independency free reign, until Rev. Solomon Fraeligh, of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, N. J., visited them and persuaded them to raise the standard of revolt of the "precious against the vile," in other words, against the Reformed Dutch Church, which had "bowed the knee to Baal."

2. The Hackensack-Schraalenburgh Insurrection

By an extraordinary set of neighborhood disputes, the people of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, only a few miles apart, had turned what might have been another garden of the Dutch church, into a prizefighters' arena, and their local churches into synagogues of Satan. These two separate churches had at first one pastor, and were one corporation. Later two factions arose in both places, which gradually developed into two congregations and two consistories at each place, with one clergyman residing at Hackensack and the

other at Schraalenburgh. These clergymen unfortunately usually belonged to opposite factions, and when they preached every alternate Sunday at each place, their respective adherents followed them from place to place. The procuring of the original charter by one party (later Fraeligh's party), without the knowledge of the other faction, caused the main dissension. At the same time,—1730-1771,—the people were divided by strife between the Coetus party, which desired a separate ecclesiastical organization in America, and the Conferentie party, which wanted to remain under the renowned Classis of Amsterdam, and have the ministers ordained in Holland. The line of cleavage was kept up during the War for Independence, so much so, that they stigmatized each other as Whigs and Tories. Still later they divided largely as Democrats and Federalists; but meanwhile, and all the time, there were disputes about church property and conflicts on matters of discipline. The record of the warfare in these two churches is a disgrace to the Christian Church. Calvinists do not believe that the Holy Spirit leads church rebellions where earnest pastors persist in offering salvation to all; and therefore the mainspring of the secession must be found elsewhere. The record says the people of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh followed their pastors Sundays, "meeting like two angry waves." The fight was intense for years, and the quarrels of Solomon Fraeligh's and Warnoldus Kuyper's people were before classes and synods, time after time, and committees failed to reconcile the warring factions, even after the churches were attached to separate classes. Rev. Kuypers died in 1797, and Rev. Jas. V. C. Romeyn was called against the wishes of Fraeligh. Gradually conditions grew worse, until Romeyn accused Fraeligh of receiving members from his church who had been suspended, and of other irregularities, notably the Hookie Brom case. The Particular Synod reversed the action of the Classis of Paramus, which had favored Fraeligh. The latter, who also lost in the General Synod by a vote of 36 to 8,

and who had for many years been recalcitrant in many respects, failed to appear after repeated summons, and went into New York state to the ministers he himself had helped to suspend in 1820, and persuaded them to join him in seceding — a movement consummated at Schraalenburgh October 22, 1822, known as the Secession of 1822, and resulting in the organization of the so-called True Reformed Dutch Church.

Fraeligh had at first attempted to unite the people, but later he was one of the worst of the agitators; and for years he had a sort of ecclesiastical detective service without the knowledge of the constituted authorities of the Church. The appointment of Livingston as professor of theology at New Brunswick in 1810, offended Fraeligh, and he threatened "to make them feel his power."

In 1873, Jacob Brinkerhof of Brooklyn wrote the History of the True Reformed Dutch Church, and he says he was home at Schraalenburgh from New York the day that church was organized, and that the Seceders had dinner at his father's house. There were present Revs. Abraham Brokaw of Ovid, Henry V. Wyckoff of Charlestown, Silvanus Palmer of Union, John G. Toll of Middletown, N. Y., all suspended and deposed ministers, together with a few elders. Brinkerhoff says, p. 35, "They reviled and ridiculed the ministers and members of the Reformed Church with a merriment and ribaldry too gross for the morality of any professor of religion. The vulgarity of the whole was simply disgusting." Rev. Fraeligh was the leader, himself in process of discipline. (He had been assistant professor of theology since 1792, and was therefore responsible to the General Synod for his conduct.) Of the people Brinkerhoff says, p. 36, "Many could not read tolerably or write legitimately, and to this day many cannot read their own vernacular. People knew nothing about Pelagianism and Hopkinsianism, except that they were told these were horrible corruptions in the old body."

The Seceders published a statement, dated Oct. 25, in which they held the whole Reformed Church re-

sponsible for the theological error of a few, while the standards are acknowledged to have been adhered to closely, Br. p. 37. Errors in doctrine, desecration of the sacraments, failure of discipline, are alleged as the causes of separation. Nevertheless, in the troubles at Hackensack not a single doctrine or point essential to salvation was involved, but the dispute turned on the following: 1. The secret charter. 2. Ordination, etc., in Holland or in America. 3. Politics. 4. Disputes about church property, etc. If the cause of secession be located in the "corrupt Classis of Montgomery," it is pertinent to ask whether that Classis, in settling the question of presentation of the Gospel to all instead of the elect, did not have a more valid reason to secede from Solomon Fraeligh and allies than vice versa. For surely that Classis and the majority of the fathers in the Dutch Church rescued that church from a lingering death, by facing forward toward foreign missions instead of toward the cast-iron formalism and Antinomianism that strangled the True Reformed Dutch Church from the beginning. In the whole history of this secession we look in vain for a solid scriptural rule of action; nothing appears but a series of quarrels about non-essentials, while the important matter involved in the Ten Eyck controversy, has long been practically settled against the Seceders. Nothing remains, therefore, but questions of weaknesses or imperfections in the Reformed Church, and these never have been held by competent authorities to justify schism and desertion. Deviations, and weaknesses, and error in non-essentials do not in the New Testament records justify brethren facing about and levelling their guns on their fellow-soldiers in the warfare against their common enemy. The church at Corinth was worldly, wicked, "corrupt," but to Paul it was still "the Church of God which is at Corinth."

Dr. Fraeligh was not a great man, for all that rather able, and a forceful character. His successor, Rev. Cornelius T. Demarest of the English Neighborhood church, as leader of the "True Church" was still more aggressive, but also more unscrupulous. During

1819-1824, he was accused of falsifying the minutes of the Classis of Paramus. He corrected these minutes, gave two different conflicting copies of them, and finally claimed that they were lost. In 1824 he also seceded with part of his members, and was suspended for falsifying the minutes, and for seceding and breaking up his church. Demarest now became a leading factor in the secession church, and after Fraeligh's death in October, 1827, wrote "A Lamentation over Rev. Solomon Fraeligh," in which he also gives some history of the secession.

Years before, in 1795, during harvest, a terrific thunderstorm struck Hackensack, and a bolt of lightning struck the church steeple. The brown stone above the church door fell from its position, and was broken in three pieces, so that the word "Eendracht" was on one, and "Maakt Macht" on another. This was considered ominous by some. Demarest in Lamentation, p. 61, says of this, "This is my belief, founded on what we have seen and known of these two people, that according to the sign given July 10, 1795, the Triune God has made them two; the fire of grace on one side, and the fire of rage and discord on the other." On the other hand, Rev. Wm. Linn of New York, on a committee, in 1796, to adjust matters at Hackensack, preached there, and was reminded by the thunderstorm of the year before, and the breaking of the stone "Eendracht Maakt Macht," of the thunders of the judgment. Rev. Linn preached on Matt. 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," and said to the belligerents, "Where unity is, there the Lord commands his blessing, even life for evermore. How can we expect a blessing to attend the means of grace, if we live in strife? Will not God take His Holy Spirit from us, and give us up to our lusts? If we cannot agree here, what ground is there to believe that we are preparing for heaven, the place of eternal love and peace?" The contrast between these two views is characteristic of the whole Secession of 1822.

Dr. Fraeligh, in June, 1823, was, after repeated citation, and failing to appear, removed as professor,

and suspended as a minister of the Gospel until he should show repentance and make submission, for the reasons that he and others had seceded, and had accused the Reformed Church of disregard of discipline, of prostituting the sacraments, of indiscriminate administration of them, of sanctioning or winking at unsound doctrine.

There is little doubt that Fraeligh would not have seceded, had he not been convicted of irregularities with the members of Romeyn's church. He was satisfied with the disposition of the Ten Eyck case, and had been chairman even of the committee that managed that matter. But, after his defeat of 1822, he raised the cry of Hopkinsianism in earnest, and rallied some of the Antinomians in the Reformed Church to his standard. In the Bergen county region, Antinomian sentiment had always been rather strong even with those who did not join in the secession. Rev. Wilhelmus Eltinge of the Paramus church, who had always assisted Fraeligh in his troubles about the professorship, and the like, when he finally saw whither Fraeligh was drifting, and when he saw him so irregular in his conduct with Romeyn's people, felt it his duty to assist in guarding the Reformed Church from the danger of a dead orthodoxy without active Christianity. The Ten Eyck case had been properly handled, it is generally admitted. Dr. Steffens of the Western church said so in his pamphlet of 1893, p. 30; Rev. Hemkes of the seceded church said so on p. 17 of his *Rechtsbestaan.* The latter, however, says, "there was Eltinge—nothing was done about him." And then follow the accusations formulated by Fraeligh in 1824. Some of these accusations and also Rev. Eltinge's record, are therefore directly in issue.

Dr. Fraeligh had, in 1819, received without certificate members of Romeyn's church, baptized a child of members there under censure, and had admitted the parents to the Lord's Supper a whole year after the censure had been approved by a superior judicature. That charge of baptizing is like the one lodged against Rev. De Cock, in Holland, in 1833; but, strange as it

seems, De Cock was suspended, not because of baptizing children of other churches—that was forgotten—but for doing what was his duty to do—to attack "Two Wolves in the Fold." Rev. Van Velzen has shown that De Cock's action in baptizing children of other congregations was practically letting the parents and other ministers enforce the discipline in a church—a violation of the Scripture. If De Cock is condemned by a Van Velzen, how utterly wrong must have been the conduct of Fraeligh, and how necessary for Eltinge and others to curb the growing heresy and rebellion in their midst.

Rev. Eltinge, rather a strong man, was stationed at Paramus, for 51 years, and about the year 1800 had a great awakening in his church. In about 1821, he found friends of Fraeligh taking notes of his sermons for evidence of Hopkinsianism. In 1822, the year of the secession, Eltinge felt it necessary to combat the Antinomianism of Fraeligh and others, which he did in his "Peacemaker: or An Essay on the Atonement of Christ," and in a sermon on "The Inability of Man to Believe in Christ except the Father Draw him." It is rather remarkable that the Seceders in 1822 set up their grounds for secession in loose general terms, but that in 1824 they found evidence made in 1823 for their secession in 1822; for their main document of dissidence is the Address of 1824, largely extracted from Eltinge's pamphlet of 1823.

3. The Points at Issue

The Eastern Seceders were not in a fog as to the sacredness of church rules, and many of them rejected such rules entirely, and waged their battle on doctrinal grounds. They did not oppose hymns, or funeral sermons, nor desired feast-days, but claimed to insist on pure doctrine and discipline. The Western Seceders, of 1857 and later, insisted to the letter on the Dort church rules, opposed funeral sermons, hymns, choirs, and picnics. Doctrinal arguments they lacked, so they imported them from the New Jersey controversy of

1822-27, without importing the many refutations involved.

In the secession of 1822, Fraeligh charged those who wanted to observe a happy mean between Arminianism and Antinomianism as being Arminians, while the others called Fraeligh and his adherents Antinomians. After 1822, affidavits were published charging Fraeligh with preaching at Hackensack, Ponds and Paramus, that "temporal blessings were a curse to the reprobate"; that, "strictly speaking, the offer of salvation is not to be made to all who hear the Gospel"; that those who had left the Seceders had, in his opinion, committed the unpardonable sin. Jacob Terhune, a former elder of Fraeligh's, made affidavit that he himself had heard Fraeligh say about the conversion of the thief on the cross that it was his opinion that "it would have been better if our Savior had not converted that malefactor," and that when he reproved Fraeligh for condemning and arraigning the Savior for that act, Fraeligh replied that he had read authors who were of the same opinion. On account of Terhune's close relations with Fraeligh, his affidavit is worthy of credence. There were other affidavits. Rev. H. V. Wyckoff declared that "the elect are actually justified from all eternity"; that "God before the fall of Adam was one, but after the fall divided Himself into three persons." Rev. Palmer declared that a "believer is so clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, that God finds no fault with him." Mr. Garritson said that "the elect are justified from eternity, and that ministers and elders must preach and pray only for the elect and believers." Mr. Hopper declared that "Christ died no more for all men than for devils, that temporal blessings are a curse to the reprobate, that salvation and Christ are not to be offered to the non-elect, and that man is not a free agent." All these assertions of the leading Seceders were shown by sworn statements to have been made; and, what is more important, is that the records of the Seceders, after 1826, attest the truthfulness of these affidavits so conclusively that no

further evidence is needed. For these records contain the most scathing denunciation of the Antinomian heresies of most of their own people. Of course, Fraeligh and Demarest saw, but saw too late, where the Seceders were drifting. They had taken their intention to restore what they considered pure doctrine as their guide, without knowing the ruinous tendency of an abnormal emphasis on purely speculative points, or on a few doctrines to the neglect of other doctrines.

The Seceders furnished in 1824, in their Address, what purported to be quotations of leading men in the Reformed Dutch Church, like Profs. Livingston and Ludlow, and Dr. Cannon (not yet professor). Dr. Livingston is asserted as teaching the students that "there is nothing in the Scriptures to forbid the hope that all infants die in Christ," that "all heathen shall possibly not perish," and that "the greatest part of mankind will be saved." Now, if these statements contained all Dr. Livingston said on these subjects, and if they had not been still further twisted by the Seceders in Michigan in 1857, and later, by leaving out the word "possibly," etc., we would simply dismiss them as samples of slight indiscreetness on the professor's part. But all were wrenched from their connection, and one of the defenders of Livingston speaks as follows in "Review and Refutation" (1824), p. 36: "Answer to question, 'Shall infants be saved?'—Some rashly send all infants to hell, others carry them all to heaven. We say, for the infants of one or both believing parents, there is a promise of salvation in the Scriptures; their original sin is enough to condemn them, the atonement of Christ is sufficient to save them; we leave them where the Bible leaves them, in the hands of a merciful God, and come to Livingston's conclusion, in the Scriptures there is nothing to forbid the *hope* that all infants die in Christ."

In answer to the question about the perishing of the heathen, the same author says, "They all deserve condemnation, on the ground of the law; the atonement of Christ is abundantly sufficient to save them.

God ordinarily reveals his Son by the Gospel and His Spirit. God is able, and may immediately by His Spirit, make known His Son to some of the heathen; whether He does so, the Bible does not tell us. Without sending them all to hell, or carrying them all to heaven, we leave them where the Bible leaves them, in the hands of a merciful God. The natural impossibility of their salvation being removed by the fullness and sufficiency of the atonement, God is able, and may remove the moral impossibility by His Spirit immediately; hence we fall in with Livingston's answer, *possibly* all the heathen shall not perish."

The same author says about the greatest part of mankind being saved, "The theory is that for 6,000 years, the smallest part of mankind shall be saved, and such passages as 'straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it' (Matt. 7:14), seem to be restricted to that period; that for 1,000 years, during the glorious millennium, by the dense population of the earth, and the universal prevalence of true religion, the ingathering into the Church will be so great, as not only to make up for the loss in 6,000 years, but to cast the balance by numbers in favor of the saved; and thus Christ will prove victor, and Satan the vanquished, even as to numbers. This theory is pleasing as well as rational; and I see nothing in it when thus explained, anti-scriptural; I feel therefore inclined to fall in with Dr. Livingston's opinion, that the greatest part of mankind shall be saved." Review and Refutation, p. 36. Thus, one of Livingston's friends explains what substance there was in the charges made.

Prof. Ludlow it is charged, "taught the students that paradise is not heaven, but an intermediate state to which the souls of believers go after death, and remain there until the final judgment." Corwin, in his Manual, says Ludlow was appointed on account of his "grave theology"; and there is no evidence that he taught the students as charged; but there is evidence that he told his students what the Jews understood by

Paradise, and that Justin Martyr, Irenaeous, Tertullian, Lactantius and Augustine believed in a middle state. Ludlow was professor in 1819-23, and again in 1852-57, and between those dates he was offered all the seminary chairs at different times, without any objection from the Classis of New Brunswick, which was the watchdog of orthodoxy in those days. No doubt, Livingston and Ludlow talked these matters over with their students, as was their right and duty; but both knew how far theology had been worked out by the Reformed theologians, and that they had the right to "hope" certain things not so worked out, without forcing their hopes and ideas on students, where the Bible was silent.

That Livingston even "believed" in infant salvation is evident from a letter written to his son, who had lost a little daughter. The letter, dated Jan. 13, 1825, shortly before his own death, says, "I firmly believe that all who die in infancy, before they are capable of actual sinning, are saved through and by the Lord Jesus; for those who have sinned in mature age, bitter repentance and firm faith are indispensable." Gunn's Livingston, p. 467.

Dr. Kuyper, the great Dutch authority on such questions, says in his "Calvinisme en Revisie," p. 32, that after the Calvinistic churches at the Synod of Dort had decided that infants under the covenant relation who died were elect and saved, "they remained silent in their confession on the children of Mohammedans and those of the heathen, not because they denied that God could even there work His secret work of grace, but because the Bible was silent on the subject, and the church could not therefore speak with authority." Dr. Livingston, for the same reason, did not speak with authority, but he nevertheless had a right to believe that there was nothing in the Scripture to forbid the *hope* that all infants died in the Lord and were saved, not by themselves, or because they were infants, but, as he says, "through and by the Lord Jesus."

The greatest Calvinist in the Eastern Reformed Church, Dr. George S. Bishop, of East Orange, N. J., said in 1887, in a sermon on Predestination, "The doctrine of the Reformed Church, the oldest form of Catholic Calvinism, is that *all infants who die are elect.* The rest, the other infants who grow up to years of conscious and intelligent responsibility are dealt with as intelligent and responsible. That is our doctrine, and that is, as we read it, the doctrine of all other Calvinistic confessions."

Dr. Cannon, then of New York, was accused of saying, "There will be more in heaven than hell can contain," and from this garbled expression, Cannon was called a universalist. Judging from the evidently adequate conception of the capacity of hell that Cannon had, as expressed in these quoted words, there is nothing that savors of the idea that no one will get into hell. Cannon's record after 1824 as professor is without blemish, if the action of the Classis of New Brunswick counts for anything.

4. Rev. Wilhelmus Eltinge on the Atonement

But the scapegoat upon whom all the sins of the Reformed Dutch Church were laid was Rev. Eltinge, whom the Seceders stigmatized as Arminian and Universalist. They charged him with saying that "The Atonement of Christ is not so limited as to be confined to the elect," which phraseology would show or tend to reveal Universalism; but Eltinge's real words were, "The Atonement of Christ is not so extensive as actually to effect the salvation of all mankind (as the Universalists say) ; neither is it so extensive as to procure and supply saving grace to all mankind (as the Arminians say) ; nor is it so limited as to be confined solely and wholly to the elect (as the Antinomians say) ; in other words, that Christ died more for all men than for devils; that all those temporal blessings which men enjoy over devils, they have through the death of Christ," Review p. 3. Eltinge is also blamed for

saying that "Christ died for all mankind in a certain sense, so as to remove, on the part of God, the difficulties in the way of salvation." But "Review," p. 34, denies this, and says Eltinge defended the following heads: 1. "The Atonement has removed the difficulties in the way of salvation on the part of God. 2. The Atonement has done so, so as to remove the difficulties on the part of man, so as to leave all men without excuse on Gospel grounds. 3. The Atonement has done so, on the part of man, so as to secure and effect the complete salvation of the elect." The Seceders also charged Eltinge with saying that "the particularity of redemption consists not in the price, but in the application." Eltinge, however, said, "The death of Christ, considered with regard to its intrinsic value is illimitable; with regard to its offer and temporal effect, it is universal; but with regard to its saving effect, it is limited to the elect only."

The Seceders also quoted Eltinge as saying, "Thus you may see how a way is opened, through the death of Christ, for the salvation of all mankind." But the sense of the "Peacemaker" is so mangled by the Seceders, that the latter do not show what Eltinge said. Eltinge quoted repeatedly the Canons of Dort, e. g., Second Head, Art. 6, "It is not owing to any defect or insufficiency in the Atonement, but it is wholly to be imputed to themselves," and Art. 9, Third Head, "It is not the fault of the Gospel, nor of Christ offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the Gospel, and confers on them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the Word refuse to come and be converted; the fault lies in themselves." Eltinge did not say that the difficulties in the way of salvation are always removed, so he is not a universalist. He did not believe the doctrines of indefinite atonement and natural ability, as the Arminians do; but with the Calvinists, against the Antinomians, he believed the Atonement, as to its objective fullness or sufficiency to be indefinite; and that man has natural ability *so far* as to constitute him a living, rational, and responsi-

ble being; that as natural power is necessary to the performance of a spiritual action, a holy or spiritual power is also necessary, which the Spirit of God must communicate." Review p. 37.

There is nothing in Eltinge's pamphlets that denies total inability and depravity in man, although he seems to claim them to be moral inability and depravity; nor does he deny the definite nature of the Atonement with regard to its saving effect and ultimate end. He tried to find a happy medium between Arminians and Antinomians, and maintained that man's inability was moral, not natural; that man has animal and rational powers, and is not a stock or a stone. On p. 9 of the "Peacemaker" he says, "I do not assert that Christ died in the same sense, and procured the same blessings for all mankind that he did for the elect; yet I do assert that Christ has died in a certain sense and has procured certain blessing for all mankind." Eltinge "preferred to view sin as a crime, wilfull, culpable, and inexcusable, and the Atonement as a satisfaction for crime, and thus opening a way for any sinner to come to Christ, by procuring, not only negative blessings, viz., a removal of the obstacles on the part of God, but also positive temporal blessings for the removal of the obstacles on the part of the sinner, *so far*, as to leave every gospel hearer without excuse, not only on the ground of the law, but also on the ground of the gospel," "Review," p. 9. "Eltinge will not have it with the Arminians, that Christ laid down His life as much, and in the same sense, for the goats as for the sheep, but he will have it, against the Antinomians, that Christ laid down His life more for the goats than for fallen angels," Review, p. 22.

It is remarkable that Dr. Fraeligh very seldom preached from the Heidelberg Catechism, while Eltinge did so statedly; and it is also worthy of notice that Eltinge heard Rev. H. V. Wyckoff, a Seceder, suggest and recommend an alteration of that catechism, particularly of the fifteenth Lord's Day, where the words, "He suffered," are explained by saying that Christ

"sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God, against the sins of all mankind." Review, p. 39.

The writer of Review and Refutation, above quoted, says on p. 24, that the reason Eltinge and others fought the Seceders so hard was because the latter and their friends, or some of them, held the following doctrines, viz: "that the elect are actually justified from all eternity, that God loves them with a love of complacency before they believed, that Christ died no more for all men than for devils, that temporal blessings are in their nature and design curses to the non-elect, that the reprobate are only sent here to be ripened and fatted for hell, that Christ and salvation are not to be offered to the non-elect, that man by nature is not only under a moral inability, but also under a natural inability to love and serve God; that man is not a free agent, and of course not a responsible being; that a believer is so clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, that God finds no fault with him, or that no personal holiness is required; that ministers must pray and preach only for the elect and believers; that God before Adam's fall was one, but after it divided Himself into three persons; that the Seceders discouraged an inquiring person by telling him that no matter how much he wept and prayed, and read and heard the Word, and repented and believed, if he was not of the elect, he must be lost."

Against such Antinomian extremes Eltinge preached pointedly, and "declared that after the example of Christ, ministers must preach and pray for all men, and that if they repented and believed, they would be saved; and that whether they were elected or not, was not the question in place here; and that the decrees of election and non-election were not the rule of our faith and salvation, but the revealed will of God expressed in the Gospel, 'Him that cometh unto me will I in no wise cast out'."

5. Rebels on the Rampage

Is it surprising, when the leaders of the Secession

of 1822, including Fraeligh, and later, Demarest, persistently preached such extreme Antinomian doctrine as that the elect are absolutely justified from all eternity, and that personal holiness and correct living count for nothing, that their church by 1827 was the corruptest in America? The pamphlets of Rev. Paulison (1831) and J. V. S. Lansing (1827), and their own minutes, reveal the depth of corruption in that True Dutch Church. Rev. Demarest's letter to Fraeligh, dated June 14, 1827, printed in the Minutes of their Synod, p. 56, shows the hopelessness of the situation. One paragraph, especially, is directed against their own prevailing weakness, "that when once we receive a man as a saint, we must never let him go, whatever his subsequent conduct may be. On this ground [Rev. H. V.] Wyckoff retains many of his members, and others whom he called poor tumblers, who, as he said, got drunk often, came drunk to church, remained drunk half a week, or a whole month; from whom he learnt many a lesson on 'free grace' in pardoning such black devils, etc., and who, he is sure of it, as if the event had already happened, would doubtless dwell forever in the kingdom of heaven. Mr. [Rev.] Palmer said it was a mistake to suppose that Noah got drunk but once, and that David committed adultery but once."

This is one of the many quotations that could be made from these minutes. The inference is irresistible that many of the True Church people thought Noah and David, like the drunkards of Charlestown, N. Y., were habituals, but had been clothed with the robe of righteousness; that God found no fault with them because they had been elected, and justified from all eternity, and that, therefore, they could raise the devil with impunity. No wonder all discipline as to morals disappeared in the True (?) Dutch Church.

One of the points in dispute was the difference between natural and moral disability. One of the seceded ministers declared at Paramus that "his hearers, while unconverted, were not only dead in sins, but also as dead as a dead body," when an Englishman in the audi-

ence replied that he could show the dominie something different with his fists. The "Review" on page 31, explains the view of some of the opponents of secession thus: "Man, in his fallen state has not the principle of holiness to perform a holy action—the Spirit must give this principle. Animal powers, and rational faculties, man in his fallen state has, and so far he can perform a good action, as to the matter of it, although he needs the Holy Spirit as to principle and motive. Natural powers constitute man a responsible being. Man, then, as man has natural powers to perform a good action without the aid of the Spirit, so far as to bring him under obligation to perform a good action, and to leave him without excuse when he neglects it. In this sense, then, and so far, man has as much natural power to perform a good action as a bad one."

With such arguments, it is not difficult to see where the trouble lay. The questions of man's responsibility and predestination, of the uselessness or necessity of a holy active Christian life, of offering Christ promiscuously or only to the supposedly elect, of the nature of the atonement, of depravity and inability, divided the people. Each side held an end of the Canons of Dort, with the result that they disrupted and tore the church, instead of agreeing as to essentials. With the decrees of election in the hands of God, and the command of God to come and believe in the Scriptures, one of the parties may have placed too much emphasis on man's responsibility, and the other too much on the doctrine of election. But it cannot be denied that as neither Eltinge nor Ten Eyck denied election and free grace, they had decidedly the better of the argument, and that the Seceders had no right to secede when they were committing the greatest error in the history of the church, namely, mistaking their Antinomian heresy for real religion. They added to heresy, lordship over the faith, and upon the failure of such attempted dictatorship, they added rebellion.

In 1817-24, the General Synod of the Reformed

Dutch Church took a definite stand for the old Standards; and although it admitted Ten Eyck had spoken in inaccurate terms, it was also compelled to condemn the heresies of the Seceders. It was undoubtedly of incalculable benefit that Eltinge gained the day against the wild lawless hyper-Calvinists of that day. It is evident that the whole trouble consisted in giving importance to certain doctrines, as if these doctrines bore no relation to other doctrines, and that the Seceders were much more unreasonable than the others. There certainly was nothing in Fraeligh's crusade that should have any weight in Michigan in 1857 and later. The secession of 1822 found her death-warrant in her own minutes beginning in 1826. In 1827 the evidence in those minutes against the rebel ministers, except Brokaw, is so damaging that no Reformed testimony could be as strong. Fraeligh and Demarest saw the handwriting on the wall, when it was too late, and the True Reformed Church sentenced to death their own handiwork when, in 1829, they condemned Revs. Wyckoff, Lansing and the Classis of Union. In 1822 they resolved to restore the church to her original purity (no matter what the Holy Spirit said), and by that act they claimed to remain the real Reformed Dutch Church. Yet in 1828 this purified church had lapsed into lawlessness and fatalism, and her people thought they were elected, no matter how they lived, as their Minutes show. There is little doubt, that if all sorts of questions causing anger and clashes had not intervened, Fraeligh would have seen from his knowledge of church history, Providence pointing with an unerring warning finger to the rocks and shoals of Labadism. But his anger blinded his eyes and he broke the bonds of love by secession. His report of 1825, recommending the excommunication of the whole Reformed Dutch Church on a certain set date, shows the state of his mind. No wonder that this project practically killed the True Church. Rev. Lansing claimed there were true believers in the old church, but Demarest and others did not relish this

truth. But that excommunication process was halted only because Fraeligh and Demarest became satisfied that excommunication technically applied only to individuals, not to churches, and then only upon trial of private conduct. It was finally dropped because the secession was held to be a virtual excommunication.

On July 6, 1824, Dr. Milledoler preached to the Classis of Paramus at Hackensack on I Cor. 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." In that sermon and in the report to the Synod, the controversy is reviewed, and attention called to Ten Eyck's explanation, that, though the atonement of Christ was of infinite value, nevertheless that Christ died savingly only for the elect, which is, indeed, far from preaching an unlimited atonement; and to the fact that the General Synod was satisfied, from Ten Eyck's whole deportment, that he had acted inadvisedly and imprudently in publishing his pamphlet, which act they condemned, and that, considering the explanations rendered, there was not sufficient ground for his suspension. Milledoler, regarding the claim of the suspended and seceded ministers that they could not associate with men who advocated Hopkinsian errors, said, "The whole of this matter is that the ministers alluded to were deposed from their office, not for maintaining truth against error, but for insubordination to the constituted authorities of the church; and for such insubordination, too, as placed their best friends in a situation in which it was impossible to justify their conduct."

Letters from Dr. Fraeligh to Revs. Eltinge, Hasbrouck and Cannon, written some years before, show him to have been long of a discontended and troublesome mind, and the affidavit of Judge Jacob Terhune, once an elder of Fraeligh, a member of the legislature, and for years judge of Bergen county, shows the main cause of Fraeligh's secession to have been his treat-

ment of Romeyn's members, for Terhune says, he, without knowing the secession had taken place submitted to Fraeligh another plan to adjust matters with Romeyn, when Fraeligh declared, if that had been done "he would not have gone from the church." Taylor's Annual of the Classis of Bergen, p. 230.

In June, 1825, a committee of the General Synod of the True Church reported, recommending that the ministers, elders and deacons composing the synods, classis and consistories of the so-called Reformed Dutch Church, and all who were members and continued in communion with them, be "excommunicated and delivered to Satan until they repent," and that "a day be set for such excommunication." Fraeligh was chairman of that committee. Action was deferred till June 1826, when the subject was indefinitely postponed, Annals of Bergen, p. 274. Secession was finally thought a sufficient excommunication of the whole Christian world, without donating further to the Devil.

Several lawsuits for the church property took place, as at Ovid, West New Hampstead, and English Neighborhood. Blauvelt, a Seceder student, was shot at, locks and doors were occasionally broken, and at Aquackenonck, it is claimed the church was set afire. Many things were done decently and in order to the edification of—the world. Families were divided and disrupted, and the feelings engendered were the delight of the worldly-minded neighbors.

Demarest, in his Lamentation over Fraeligh, calls apostrophies to the departed spirits of Dr. Livingston, Laidlie and other, idolatry, worship of saints—popery, yet he fairly claims Fraeligh heard a voice from heaven directing him. Fraeligh was "heaven-born." Dr. Milledoler's beautiful sermon at Hackensack "must have proceeded from the Spirit of Lies." Demarest also gives a few salient facts of the life of Fraeligh, and particularly, that he was, in 1800, one of the presidential electors voting for Jefferson, the awakening in Fraeligh's church in 1800, etc. One exaggerated statement after another appears in the Lamentation. How-

ever, Rev. Jas. V. C. Romeyn scored the Seceders unmercifully in the newspapers, and accused the Seceders of uttering in the pulpit, "by one or the other of the fraternity," of the following doctrines: that the standards of the Reformed Church and of Dort are unscriptural; that the Gospel must be preached to the elect only; that the bounties of Providence and of Gospel privileges are, in themselves, and as bestowed by God, curses to the non-elect; that our Savior did wrong in converting the thief on the cross; that those who once followed them [Seceders] and have gone back, walking no more with them, have committed the unpardonable sin. Brinkerhof, p. 43.

Rev. C. T. Demarest lost two children at English Neighborhood, N. J., and at about the time he was suspended in 1824, he had a tombstone erected over their remains with the following inscription: "We have buried our children with the Outcast of God," thus inscribing in stone his inveterate hostility. A few days later the stone was found in the road broken in three pieces, and Demarest, complaining, asked why the enemy had not dug up the remains also, and thrown them to the hogs. Brinkerhof, p. 59.

The True Dutch Reformed Church reached its high water mark in 1825, with 21 churches, composing the two classes of Hackensack and Union,—both tinctured with Antinomianism and Independency. In 1828, the Classis of Union returned their copies of minutes of their General Synod, stating in writing that the minutes were false and the work of an "overbearing majority acting as a false church," and referring to the "serpentine conduct of the Stated Clerk [Demarest] and his coadjutors." In 1829 the majority of the Classis of Union were practically expelled without a hearing, because they refused to submit to the "purging" process. Their own minutes speak, p. 33, of their having felt each other's "horns and hoofs." In 1828, Rev. Peter Fraeligh, son of Dr. Fraeligh, took his own life, having been charged with undue influence in drawing a will by which he would have benefited. This

caused immense excitement, although Corwin's Manual softens this matter generously.

In 1829, Rev. J. V. S. Lansing was declared an "apostate," and his name erased from all the records. Rev. Paulison, who praised the Seceders highly in a pamphlet, and joined them in 1831, the next year repudiated them in a powerful pamphlet, and referred to them "as the corrupt leaven of church pride, party spirit (political, he meant) and false religion were at work and prevailed," "Gospel hated in reality," "superficial professors who thought they knew a great deal, but who never discovered a saving acquaintance with the first lessons taught in the school of Christ." In 1834 the elders Van Houten and Westervelt were removed, and the Paterson church dissolved on account of insubordination and heresy. In 1833, the Mount Morris church was divided on certain questions, and the Synod commanded, Minutes, p. 6, that "the ministers and members of the True Dutch Church keep aloof from the benevolent and moral societies of these times," and among the reasons given are that "each member is bound to promote the objects of such societies" (although Brinkerhof says that every one knows that there was never a collection taken in their churches for such purposes), "and that some of those societies require their constitutions to be pasted on the fly-leaf of Bibles," etc., "which no Christian can accede to."

In 1842, we read of "want of brotherly love"; in 1843, it is "churches diminishing in numbers by deaths, by removals, by apostasy to the corrupt body we left; or some other body, if possible, still more corrupt," Br. p. 79; in 1849, it is "much lukewarmness and barrenness in both ministers and people," Br. p. 80. In 1851, Brinkerhof says, the whole affair has now come down to such a state as to be mainly dependent upon the political affinities of democrats for a continued existence, p. 80. Brinkerhof, who was very familiar with the whole history of the secession, in 1853, challenged Rev. C. T. Demarest to a joint debate on the subject, which the latter did not accept.

Writing to Fraeligh, Demarest said, "the seeds of discord, the elements of disorganization, are deep-rooted and abundant among us, and unless the Lord prevent, will begin to spring up and rapidly grow to the great distress and grief of our Zion." In a pastoral letter of 1827, signed by Rev. Wyckoff and Lansing, soon to be cut off, the burden is internal bickerings and narrowness of spirit, and one expression is, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Oh! who can tell what resulting triumphs would be offered to our great adversary, should we now fall by the way?" In 1833 a pastoral letter says, "Some of our churches are increasing, others decline, some have comparative peace, others are rent and torn by divisions; some doubtless will abide the trial, others are already dissolved or have apostatized; * * * some members are not sufficiently grounded in the necessity of separating from all corruptions and corrupt bodies, and keeping separate all the days of their life upon earth. We fear too that the catechising of children is neglected by some, and family worship by others," Minutes p. 12. Printed with the minutes of 1834 is an elaborate Defense, etc., of 50 pages, in which it is evident that the rocks upon which the True Reformed Church was shipwrecked were Independency and Antinomianism. The Defense says, "Since our separation from the corrupt judicatures of the Dutch Church, we have met with a succession of troubles, owing to the unsettled views of some of those who seceded, and a strong tendency in their minds toward Antinomian error in doctrine, and an independent mode of church government. It might have been conjectured, when we saw in the body to which we belonged, the authority of Christ and the laws of his house perverted to screen heresy and oppress lovers of truth, that some would be tempted, in shaking off the tyranny grafted upon Presbyterianism, to run into an opposite extreme—the wildness and lawlessness of Independency. Nor was it a matter of great surprise, after we had successfully resisted a

subtle modification of Arminianism under the name of Hopkinsianism, the great adversary should drive unstable souls through an imaginary horror of Arminianism to the opposite extreme of Antinomianism—from a dread of denying free grace to an abuse of it," p. 31. Antinomians (against the law, literally) are those who say, "If we are saved by faith, what is the use of doing good? Saints cannot do wrong, sin cannot hurt them. God does not see sin in them." "Antinomians turn the grace of God into licentiousness," p. 61. "The Hopkinsian doctrines, on account of which we left the old body, were two: Universal Atonement and Natural Ability," p. 63,—substantially, "there is no original sin, and man can regenerate himself."

Rev. Brokaw's Pastoral Letter of 1833 contains the following characteristic declarations: "the towers of the Reformation are falling," "the Reformed Church is still more corrupt," "the General Assembly has made sinful compromises," "the ancient fortress of Zion, the Reformed Presbyterian has yielded." "Who does not lament the divisions of Joseph?" "Liberty is the liberty of Popery, Hopkinsianism, Antinomianism," etc. "All good men sigh and cry"; "refrain from the assemblies of the corrupt" (other churches). "Converts are needed — broken-hearted, regenerated, weeping, praying souls." (Just as if there were none in the other churches with a broken and a contrite spirit.)

A pastoral letter of 1859 says, "Abstain from visiting the Sunday schools, the so-called Bible classes, in upholding which all the denominations agree, and whose disqualified teachers, male and female, not authorized by Christ, are allowed to officiate." Their pastoral letter of 1858 condemns the great revivals in the East, and ascribes them to Satan. In 1843, they challenged the Baptists to call themselves "Mersers, Immersers, Submersers, Dippers, and the like. We dare them to be so consistent."

The efforts of the seceded brethren for pure doctrine showed that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They broke the communion

of saints by virtually excommunicating Protestant Christendom, and signalized the Methodists as sinners above all. Their aloofness from all benevolent and moral movements violated the basic law of Christianity—love of mankind. They left the Dutch church because the rules were enforced, but within ten years they condemned and excommunicated one another, and thus became the most tyrannical church of all. They charged against the Reformed church in 1822, that the Lord had a controversy with her, because she opened the floodgates of error; persecuted and starved faithful pastors; had ignorant consistories, ministers, and synods; prayerless, godless members; and allowed Methodists to preach and take communion with them: while the Seceders themselves knew not that the most rigid orthodoxy usually reigned with spiritual darkness, that Methodism everywhere has tried to recall the churches to Godly acts, and has, by its fearless and timely declarations of war against all forms of evil, deserved the title of The Almighty's Thundering Legion. The True Church in 1822 unanimously agreed to restore the church to her original purity, and thereby remain the true Reformed Dutch Church, but it established a dictorial, Labadistic, Antinomian oligarchy—a lordship over the faith, an impossibility when it claimed practically "absolute perfection as an additional mark of the true church of God, which betrayed both ignorance and presumption, and if rigidly carried out, would not leave a single true church on earth," Annals of Bergen, p. 225. It is inconceivable that the Holy Spirit inspired Dr. Fraeligh and the others to extreme defense of orthodoxy, to break the unity of the church and the communion of saints, and thus to become, by their exclusiveness and Pharisaism, the worst enemies of true holiness. No wonder Dr. Steffens in his *Gedachten*, p. 30, calls the movement a "pietistic, Labadistic, and Antinomian schism."

The capital error of the secessionists was the attempt to magnify the tenets of election and rejection, which tended to obliterate human responsibility, and

caused men to say, "Nothing can hinder the salvation of the elect, let them live as they please, and nothing can assist the reprobate, though they perform the works of the saints." They preached in and out of season the doctrine that man had been absolutely predestinated either to be saved or to be lost, from all eternity,—a dangerous medicine, against which the fathers of Dort had warned when they said, Canons, Head 1, Art. 14, that this doctrine of election should be preached "in due time and place," "in the spirit of discretion and piety," and "without prying into the secret things" of the Most High. All Calvinists believe that man was predestinated to be saved or lost from all eternity, but that this doctrine must not be preached promiscuously and without regard to the state of spiritual development of the hearers. The half has not been told about the wickedness of this True Reformed Dutch Church. One of the most unusual and unscriptural rules these Seceders had adopted required that every witness in their church courts should be a member of their church in regular and good standing, before his testimony could be admitted. In fact, it was Rev. Paulison's rejection of this rule that largely caused the second secession from that church in 1832. Their insistence on separation from the world, their rejection of Christian churches who agreed with them on the New Testament essentials, are the factors that lay their secession open to suspicion. Their war, their controversy (Fraeligh's controversy—not God's), has been irretrievably lost, and the Dutch church has faced forward ever since, and heard the Macedonian call "Come over and help us."

Dr. Fraeligh and the Seceders practically made Paul a heretic, for he merely warned the Corinthians against most of their litigations, crimes and heresies. He did not secede from, nor excommunicate them, nor "deliver them to Satan." Drunkenness at the communion service was one of the counts against them, yet Paul, despite all those besetting sins, heterodoxy, and what not, says, "I thank my God always on your behalf,

for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ," I Cor. 1:4. This church was young, and firmness was tempered with gentleness; but Paul knew that his action toward that church would be followed as a precedent, and if secession and desertion on account of defects were right, he would have said so. It is remarkable that the apostle who wrote the most about predestination and election, and the sovereignty of God, was the most persistent, irrepressible missionary of all time. The Reformed Dutch Church held with Paul on both questions, as is fully demonstrated in her history by her synodical legislation and her missionary endeavors. This is more than can be claimed for the True Reformed Dutch Church. The "precious" were not all with Fraeligh, nor the "vile" with Kuypers at Hackensack. There is no evidence that Kuypers and Romeyn were Arminians, but there is evidence that Fraeligh and the Seceders missed the grandest truths of Calvinism, when they decided that the rest of the world was too unclean to associate with, and was therefore excommunicated.

A multitude of details have been given above, because, in legal parlance, they are part of the *res gestae* (things done, the entire transaction, the essential circumstances attending the transaction). Things said and done show the mental attitude, the heart of the actors. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. True faith manifests itself outward into actions and good works. Now, Dr. Fraeligh and his followers were probably pious and sincere, but so were de Labadie and other pietists. It was, however, poor strategy to retire from the field into forts to be besieged, and surrender the field to the enemy. Fraeligh was guilty not only of surrendering the field, but he used what guns he had against those who were his brethren in the Army of the Lord. From fear of conformity to the world, the Seceders went to the opposite extreme of conformity to the cloister.

And the extremity to which almost all of the Seceder ministers, except, perhaps, Fraeligh and De-

marest, went on the question of Church Rules is evident from a little work published in 1823, by one of the suspended ministers, Rev. Amerman, entitled "The Church of Christ Independent of the Synod of Dordrecht, and all other synods, or Scriptural Principles in Relation to the Order and Government of the Church," with notes, and also as appendix, Carson's "Reasons for Separating from the Classis of Ulster" (Ireland). In this book are the following expressions: "The undersigned objects to the government of the Reformed Dutch Church, because it is regulated by a code of laws, the result of human wisdom." "The undersigned denies that the children of God can constitute representatives who shall determine for them what is truth and duty." Carson says, p. 62, "If a particular [Independent] church degenerates, becomes erroneous or indifferent, or ineffectual, it has no power to injure others, or to draw them into its errors." Carson also says, p. 91, "Liberty to enact laws as regulations [for churches] according to the exigence of circumstances, is to arraign the competency of Christ as King of the Church, and a declaration that He left the code of laws imperfect." All this is strange language for those who in 1822 claimed they left the Reformed Church "in order to remain the true Reformed Dutch Church." This is Independency of the strongest kind, and this is heterodoxy of a most malignant type, involving the destruction of Church Rules not only, but also that of the Catechism, the Confession, and the very Canons of Dort.

No doubt the True Reformed churches were honeycombed with such heresies in 1822, but the seeds were sown, and the bitter fruit thereof disrupted and well-nigh annihilated them. The mother church was saved from disaster and a similar fate, when she turned her face the other way, and listened to the call "Go teach all nations," and took her position in the far-flung battle line against the strongholds of sin in Borneo, India, China and Japan.

At the present day, even the Seceders of the West

admit that the Seceders of 1822 were Labadists. Rev. Beets in his history says he learnt this fact from reading about them, and from contact with some of their descendants who joined the western secession church in 1890. But they were declared such as far back as 1822, a hundred years ago, by the Reformed Dutch Church, which knew the facts still better. If they were Labadists and Antinomians, they were most unsafe guides. Yet this writer, Beets, in his *Zestig Jaren,* on p. 107, says that "the Reformed Church deviated from the three marks of the church in a dubious way," and that "errors were permitted like those of Ten Eyck, Field, Cannon, and others, considered at length in the well-known Brochure [of 1869], and never explained in a satisfactory manner." Of course, if one ignores all the evidence furnished by Eltinge, and by the records of the Seceders themselves, and continues to quote as authority quotations garbled from already garbled quotations of the Address of 1824, so as to maintain an excuse for the secession of 1857,—these errors of Ten Eyck and others have never been satisfactorily explained. But if the evidence of the Reformed Church is placed in array, with the quotations in their proper connection, and with the records of the Seceders themselves, the Labadistic, Antinomian heterodoxy and rebellion of Fraeligh and his followers have never been explained satisfactorily. And if the Brochure of 1869 had only "considered at length" the errors of Ten Eyck and others, and had only weighed Cannon's Pastoral Theology, instead of a garbled fragment of a sermon claimed to have been delivered at Hackensack; and had only taken these quotations from the Address of 1824, and fitted them into their proper connection, instead of disposing in one or two lines of those important matters, Fraeligh's and Brochure's cause would have suffered irreparable injury, while the Brochure authors would have saved themselves from the charge of parading the worst form of heresy and rebellion as true godliness, and would not have become the libelers of men like Prof. Cannon by means of

garbled and dishonest quotations! The leaders of the Michigan secession were filled with the husks of those Eastern "fanatics for fatalism." Is it so Christlike to foment discord among the Hollanders of Michigan, and to feed the people of Holland with such partisan, one-sided arguments, manufactured by a sect reeking with Donatism, Independency and Antinomianism, against men who tried their best to prevent the Reformed Dutch Church from going into the same or the opposite extreme? It is not so plain that Ten Eyck, Eltinge, and the Classis of Montgomery were "corrupt," as the Address of 1824 alleges; but it is plain that Fraeligh, Demarest, and the other Seceders were rather the "corrupt" deviators from Reformed doctrine and practice, according to their own records. Not a word of evidence beyond the minutes of the meetings of those Eastern Seceders is needed, to make them out as one of the greatest Antinomian abortions of the Christian era. The secession in the West of 1857, will therefore have to stand on a basis all its own, or fall to the ground.

Rev. Ten Eyck did not infringe the doctrines of predestination and free grace. In a letter to the General Synod in 1823, he says, "If sinners are lost, it is not owing to any defect in the atonement, but wholly to their wilful negligence of Christ and his salvation, that while the atonement was infinitely sufficient to save the whole human family, in itself considered, none would, however, be savingly benefited by it, but those who exercised a living faith in Christ, and none would believe *but such as were given by the Father,* as a reward of his obedience unto death. If any sinners under the Gospel are lost, it is entirely due to their wickedness and the obstinate rebellion of their own hearts, and not to the want of provision made, and freely offered in the Gospel."

If the line of division in the East in 1822 lay along the lines of too much predestination and inability on one side, and too much human responsibility and inability on the other, they should have agreed on a

reasonable correlation of the two, as the Fathers of Dort did, and as the Reformed Dutch Church desired. Fraeligh should not have seceded when most of the errors were his, for it is not scriptural to leave a church on the score of weaknesses in order to establish another church entirely based on errors.

In this chapter the writer has purposely permitted the records of the Seceders to do most of the talking, because they furnished him the clearest and most conclusive evidence that the Western Seceders of 1857 were misled not by friends, but by perverters of Reformed doctrine and practice—perverters who, though they later on inveighed against Labadism, kept right on in the same track of error, and republished their addresses of 1822 and 1824 in 1847 and 1852. They were on the wrong track in 1822, and during their whole history.

The True Reformed Dutch Church, forty years ago, was facing disintegration, and in 1890, after much negotiation about the 52 hymns suited to the 52 divisions of the Heidelberg Catechism, which were allowed, thirteen remaining churches joined the Christian Reformed Church of the West; but in 1907 several of these churches broke away on account of unwillingness to debar minor secret societies, like Odd Fellows.

6. One Side of the Story Used in Michigan in 1856-7

But why reiterate the shortcomings of Christian brethren, long since gone? The answer is found in the close connection of the Secession of 1822 with a similar movement in the Reformed Churches in Michigan, in 1857, in which the allegations of Dr. Fraeligh and his helpers, formed with some the main driving force. Three or four of the leaders of the break in Michigan were in communication with the leaders of the True Reformed Dutch Church in New Jersey. Gysbert Haan, an elder in the Grand Rapids Dutch Church, says in his pamphlet *Stem Eens Belasterden,* that he was among the Seceders out East, and found them

essentially sound in doctrine, but detected traces of Labadism in them. In April, 1856, Haan showed at the Classis, a Seceder pamphlet—the reprint in 1852 of the Address of 1824—giving information as to the conditions in the Reformed Church. A year later Rev. Klyn of Grand Rapids admitted that he had been misled by Haan, who had shown him "several letters" from parties in the East. Haan was in correspondence with the Seceders in New Jersey as late as 1859, and until he re-seceded back to the Reformed Church. It is also known that John Rabbers of New Groningen received in 1857 several similar letters from the East. The minutes of the seceded church at Graafschap, March 16, 1857 [not 1856 as Seceders claim], speak of letters received from a Rev. Berdan, saying among other things, that the Reformed Dutch Church is not the true church. This was the Rev. John Berdan of the True Reformed Church at Aquackenonck, N. J., who had been active in the General Synod of that church in 1833, when the notorious resolutions in favor of "keeping aloof from all benevolent and moral societies of these times" were adopted. In a note to a copy of a letter of Rev. Klyn, written to the consistory of Graafschap, Aug. 27, 1857, advising a return to the fold of the Reformed Church, Herman Strabbing says, "This letter was *not* read, but heretofore when letters advising secession were received, they were always read at the conclusion of the sermon." In a letter to Rev. Van Leeuwen, dated April 6, 1864, Rev. Berdan refers to several letters written by him "to G. Haan and others in times past, about our Church, which some of you may have seen." All this is evidence of the efforts of the Eastern Seceders to influence the West.

After seceding in the West in 1857, Haan, Vanden Bosch and Krabshuis remained the leaders, and after the Synod in old Holland rejected their request for union, they continued correspondence with the True Dutch Church in New Jersey and with particular parties in the old country. The minutes of the True Dutch Church of 1859, p. 4, say that Rev. Berdan had re-

ceived two letters from G. Haan, stating that they had seceded from the Reformed Church on account of errors in doctrine, and that in Grand Rapids, they had lost the church, and now requested union with the Eastern Seceders. In 1860 the Synod of the True Dutch Church, on p. 6, reports letters from G. Haan, approving the famous "purging Lemma 17" of 1828, and stating further that the Seceders in Michigan had translated and published the pastoral letter of the True Dutch Church of 1858. This Pastoral Letter was an indictment of the Revivals in the East. After Haan returned to the Reformed Church in 1861, Rev. Van Leeuwen re-opened correspondence with the Eastern Seceders in 1864.

Haan, the ring leader of the Seceders of 1857, changed front so often that his testimony is not reliable, and at last, under the spur of criticism of his work in 1856-57, he seems to have joined the Seceders again. But in 1861 he repudiated the work of 1856-57 completely, and returned to the Reformed Church, with confession of his errors. He strenuously objected to the unchurching of the Reformed Church by the notorious Brochure, and he rejected the secession of 1822 totally; and although he had flourished before the Classis of 1856 the pamphlets of those Seceders, he wrote, Aug. 31, 1868, in a letter still in existence, "I told the American Seceders in the East many times that I would not have dared to undertake the step [secession] on the grounds assigned by them." This is a strange commentary on Haan's prior claim that they had in 1857 seceded on account of "errors in doctrine" in the Reformed Church.

Rev. R. Duiker says in his Journal, that G. Haan seceded back from the Secession on account of the prevailing Labadistic tendency as defended by Rev. Vanden Bosch and others in Michigan. The alarming growth of Antinomianism among the Hollanders of sixty years ago, both in Holland and America, cannot be appreciated today. Rev. W. C. Wust, after an absence of a few years, found his old church at Giezen-

dam, Netherlands, in 1850, thoroughly Antinomian, and his people claimed they were in Christ so free from the law, that nothing was forbidden them on the Lord's day, while those who were without Christ were obliged to observe the Sabbath strictly, because they were as yet under the law. Among the Seceders of 1822 the same spirit was prevalent, and in Michigan there were several Hollanders who even claimed that the expression "but the doers of the law shall be justified," Rom. 2:13, should be expunged from the Bible. The Bible was not orthodox enough for some of those men.

Rev. Duiker also writes that he talked with three representatives of the Secession Church of the East, when they were in the West in 1869, seeking union with the Western Seceders. Duiker states it became plain to him that to these Eastern men the Western Seceders were even too liberal, and that many of their people were afraid of joining the West. Later, Duiker says these Eastern Seceders "appeared pious men, but they admit their position is untenable, and they are declining terribly. Who can heal the breach?" These references are to Duiker's Journal for 1869.

In 1869, several seceded ministers in Michigan published a Brochure in defense of the secession in 1857, to which they added four documents of the True Reformed Dutch Church, with which to buttress their claims of corruption in the Reformed Church. These documents all antedated 1829—one was of 1822, one of 1824, and one of 1825, and the last of 1827. The Brochure authors did not date these supplements, and for that reason they have been severely criticized for leaving the impression that they wanted to make them pass as of recent origin, instead of as documents that were used to bolster up a cause lost 45 years before. The Brochure was circulated in the Netherlands as well as in Michigan, and for years its allegations have been the staple of secessionists among the Hollanders. In fact, what the Brochure says about the conditions in the Reformed Church, East and West since 1822, is

insignificant; its main points are those raised in 1822-24. It is barely possible, though highly improbable, that the causes of cleavage the immigrants of seventy years ago brought with them from Holland would have disappeared in a few years, if it had not been for the stories of error spread by the Secession of 1822-24. These seeds were dropped in a soil prepared in old Holland by fifteen years of suspicion, quarrels, and recriminations among the Seceders there. The schism of 1857 cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of its connection with that of 1822. Haan, the leader in Grand Rapids, had with him at the Classis of 1856, as stated before, a copy of the Address of 1824, reprinted by the True Reformed Dutch Church in 1852, besides several letters from Eastern Seceders; while in Graafschap, the other place of secession in 1857, they were in direct correspondence with Rev. Berdan and others. No fact in history is so well attested as the relation of these two secessions, and it is regrettable that the Seceders in the West accepted as trustworthy the criticisms on the Reformed Dutch Church, from the most unreliable source in the history of the Church of Christ—namely from Labadists, who dreamed of a perfect church here below, and from Antinomians who violated the rules of Christian conduct because they had been absolutely elected to be saved regardless of conduct and law.

These Seceders of 1822 were sorely afflicted with the three or more diseases,—Labadism, which means a spotless church; Antinomianism, a church without the moral law; Independentism, a church without Rules for decency and good order, and without the least regard to the real unity of the Christian Church. By their claims that temporal blessings were in their nature and design curses to the non-elect, etc., they rejected the whole doctrine of common grace. By their excommunication of all other Christian Churches they made themselves, to that extent, nothing less than a false church.

Years afterward, when in the West the serious re-

sults of the split there became evident, and when it was seen that the charge of heterodoxy against Van Raalte and the Western Dutch churches was untenable, and that the religious differences here were superficial and unimportant, the cause of the lamentable breach of Joseph in the West was located solely in the East. Since 1890, the Western Secession Church has found out that Fraeligh and his adherents were largely heterodox Labadists and Antinomians; but from 1869, in "Brochure" and in "Zamenspraak" and "Rechtsbestaan," these Eastern heretics were lauded as Reformed and Calvinistic; and not a word was said about the disastrous failure of that Secession of 1822. And still, Fraeligh's words are taken in the West as evidence of heterodoxy at New Brunswick and the East, and continually the Western Hollanders are regaled with the same story. It is therefore high time that the West should know that in 1829 the Secession of 1822 broke in two, that in 1832 Rev. Paulison led a second secession from that Secession of 1822, and that the minutes of what is left of the original secession after 1829, give us the strongest evidence that that secession was corrupt before it was born. All those clergymen who joined Fraeligh in 1822 were opposed to the Standards of the Reformed Church, wanted to change the Catechism, and believed that the Confession, Canons, and Rules of Dort were really unscriptural. Further these minutes show, and the West should know it, that in its essence the Secession of 1822 was nothing short of an attempt to dictate to the Reformed Dutch Church what is Reformed doctrine and practice by men like H. V. Wyckoff, Amerman, and others, who were not Reformed, either in doctrine or practice; and that that Secession was nothing less than an effort to force on the Reformed Dutch Church the system that correct Reformed doctrine and practice could be dictated by the "predestinated," "foreordained," and "elected" bums, "black devils" of Charlestown, Ovid, Schraalenbergh and Hackensack.

A Calvinist is not a fatalist, and the Synod of Dort

sounded terrible warnings against just what Fraeligh did—magnifying the doctrine of Election so much that practical religion died out among many of his followers. That Secession of 1822, by ignoring the law of love, and by deifying its conception of pure doctrine, and thus losing the spirit of truth, placed itself in the cemetery years before it was dead. Doctrine without charity is dead, and the happy combination of doctrine and life is not usually found in the religious wars of the kind involved in the Rebellion of 1822. Those Seceders insisted on the doctrine of election, but they failed to show the evidences of their own election.

What a dark light was lit at Schraalenbergh in 1822, and what a cold fire was kindled there. Those Seceders erected an image of God which they called "pure doctrine," and they worshipped this image, while the spirit of Christianity—love to God and to man—was maltreated, quenched, and dwarfed, until it was starved and frozen to death in their midst.

XIII. DR. MILLEDOLER ON THE SECESSION OF 1822

A DISCOURSE delivered by appointment of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America, in the church at Hackensack, N. J., before the Classis of Paramus, and a Commission of Synod, appointed to confer with said Classis, July 6, 1824, by Philip Milledoler, D. D., one of the Collegiate Ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church in the city of New York.

DISCOURSE

I Corinthians, 1:10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

After speaking on the text, Dr. Milledoler passed on to a consideration of the secession, and spoke in part as follows:

All this is exemplified in our own experience, and even in the present situation of our own Reformed Church. To recent events that have transpired in that church, my hearers are no strangers. A number of ministers and congregations, as you all know, have seen fit to secede from her communion, and to erect an independent standard.

The reasons assigned for that secession are, that the great body of the Dutch Church has, in a number of cardinal points, departed from the standards of her original faith, and has substituted in their place another gospel, or doctrines, called Hopkinsian; and that connected with this defection, there is such a departure

from sound discipline, as can no longer be tolerated. These charges, if true, are certainly very serious. Let us examine them:

The first is, that the great body of the Dutch Church has, in a number of cardinal points, departed from the Word of God and the standards of her original faith, and has substituted in their place another gospel, or doctrines call Hopkinsian. The first subject of inquiry under this complaint is, what are those cardinal points from which our members have departed? So far as we have been able to ascertain them, they consist principally in the doctrines of definite atonement, and human inability. Now I would meekly yet firmly inquire, where is the proof of such departure? Has the general synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, or have any of its inferior judicatories, disclaimed at any time her confession of faith, or the Heidelberg catechism? Has anything appeared in the minutes of general synod at any time, which would either directly or indirectly warrant such a charge? Has not that church uniformly maintained the cardinal doctrines of *eternal election, original sin, grace in conversion, justification by faith,* and the *saints' perseverance?* Are not these doctrines under her immediate inspection and control, publicly, zealously, and constantly inculcated by the professors of her Theological College, upon the youth committed to their care? When regular complaint has been made of the defection of any of her ministers, has the general synod ever refused to investigate the charge, or to act upon its merits?

At the last meeting of that reverend body, did they not, among other steps taken to guard the purity of their churches, *fully,* and *unanimously* disavow those false doctrines with which they have been charged?

Let us hear the voice of that synod from their own minutes:

"Whereas certain publications have issued from the press, and have been circulated in many parts of the Reformed Dutch Church, denying the doctrines of the eternal generation of the Son of God, of the total in-

ability and depravity of man, of the definite nature of the atonement of Jesus Christ, as being a sacrifice for the sins of His people, and the usefulness and binding obligations of creeds and confessions. And whereas such publications are calculated to foment the unhappy spirit now existing in many parts of the church, to increase the dissension of its members, and alienate still further the minds of the adherents of the secession; and whereas it is deemed important that the General Synod at its present session should express a definite opinion on these subjects — therefore, *Resolved,* that while this synod totally disapprove of the late secession, and of all the means that have been employed to promote it, they do decidedly disown and condemn any such doctrines before recited, set forth in such publications, and the doctrines commonly called Hopkinsian, as being contrary to the Word of God, and the standards of the Reformed Dutch Church; and at the same time, as decidedly condemn the course pursued by the ministers and members of the late secession, who by their publications and conversation, and other measures, have endeavored to establish the belief that such are the views of the Reformed Dutch Church, which views this synod unequivocally pronounce altogether calumnious."

After such a declaration as this, supported by collateral testimony so ample and decisive, with what face or colour of truth can the charge of her defection be maintained?

If any of her ministers have, at any time, avowed principles hostile to these declarations, upon them, and upon them only, be the dishonor and responsibility of of so doing.

Neither civil nor ecclesiastical courts can, at all times, correct all that is amiss. The idea of absolute perfection, therefore, in human institutions, or even in divine, so far as they are administered by men, is out of the question and it is folly and arrogance to expect it.

With respect to the charge of defection in discipline,

we can only say, that being, so far as we know, unsupported by particular *specifications*, it is impossible to tell where or how to meet it, and we can only add, that if it will apply to some of our churches, it will certainly not apply to others; that wherever this evil exists, it is much to be deplored, and ought to be corrected; but that if, in the administration of even-handed discipline on a general scale, we fall behind our sister churches in this country, we are wholly unconscious of the fact.

Now if these things are so, is it not unreasonable, is it not untender, is it not a violation of every law of righteousness, as well as Christian courtesy, for a part of such a body to break away from their Christian brethren as if they were infected with a moral pestilence?

Is this to avoid division, or is this to preserve the unity of the spirit? If these brethren felt themselves aggrieved, ought they not to have exercised more patience and forbearance? If evils existed, should they not with more long suffering have sought their removal, and have been more active in effecting it? If truth was in danger, was it right, under all the circumstances of this case, to weaken it by desertion? Could these men abandon to ruin, as they supposed, that vine under which their fathers reposed with so much safety and delight? But what do I say? Will God abandon this vine? Hath it not been planted with his own right hand; watered with prayers and tears, and nursed with the dews of Heaven? Surely chastisement is not abandonment. Perhaps some trial has been needed to awake us out of sleep, to test our fidelity, and to make our lamps burn brighter. As for God, He is a Rock—His way is perfect, and there is no unrighteousness in Him; though He frown, yet will He remember us, though He slay us, yet will we trust in Him.

In His own best time will He vindicate our cause, and bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon day.

In the meantime, and although on our own account

we do not fear the issue of this matter, we would entreat our offending brethren to pause, and to ponder on what they have done, and are doing.

The least reflection in the world will convince them how easy it is for any person to destroy, and how difficult it is, in some instances, for the wisest to restore.

The temples of Jerusalem and of Ephesus were consumed in a very few hours; and the calamities of a single night may destroy the labor of ages. The seeds of discord sown in a few unhappy hours, may be yielding their baneful fruits from generation to generation, down to the conflagration of the globe.

Is it a light thing, in the same house, to set altar against altar, and to poison the springs of intercourse of the nearest and dearest connections?

Is there, in this case, no redeeming spirit? Is this breach wide as the sea, that it cannot be healed? Would to God that our brethren would once more turn their eyes toward the city of our solemnities, and that we could hear them saying, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

This whole matter we commit to him that judgeth righteously, and hope and pray for just that consummation that shall be for His own glory.

In concluding this discourse I would inquire brethren, whether anything more can be done on our part to arrest the further progress of this evil? We have vindicated our own character, and have published our principles to the world. Will any spirit of conciliation following it, frank, generous, and godlike, be of use to change the present aspect of affairs in this region?

I believe and am sure that you are entirely prepared for the exercise of such a spirit. Should, however, the spirit of conciliation be rejected, then indeed, whatever pain it may cost us, we must do our duty.

We cannot stand by unmoved and see the body of Christ dismembered, nor can we suffer the inheritance of our God to be laid waste without entering against it our most solemn protest.

May God imbue our minds with all wisdom, re-

plenish our hearts with all grace, and in His holy providence so smile upon and direct our efforts, that we may be the honored instruments in His hand of doing much good; and to His holy name be the everlasting glory. Amen.

When Dr. Milledoler delivered the above sermon at Hackensack, July 6, 1824, and when the report given in the following chapter was written, the Seceders in the East had not yet published their manifesto of 1824, in which they endeavored to set up specific instances of heterodoxy of certain leaders of the Reformed Church. But, in 1824, also, these Seceders had not yet written into history their infamous quarrels and heresies of 1822-32, in view of which the language Milledoler applied to them in 1824 must be considered altogether too mild. But, however gentle in his expressions in 1824, Milledoler already knew that the Seceders themselves were more at fault in neglect of discipline than was the Reformed Church, that they were "as deficient as almost any of their neighbors," so that he told them, "Physician, heal thyself." And how prophetic were the words of Milledoler when he told the Seceders that "the calamities of a single night may destroy the labor of ages," and that "the seeds of discord sown in a few unhappy hours, may be yielding their baneful fruits from generation to generation," as was actually the case in Bergen county for years. "Nor," continues he, "can the leaders of the Secession, after having scattered their firebrands, tell where these may lodge, or what evil they will produce." Some of these firebrands lodged in the woods of Michigan in 1857, and started the fires of discord there.

Dr. Milledoler succeeded Dr. Livingston as president of Rutgers College and as professor of theology, 1825-41. Dr. Corwin, Manual (1902), p. 629, says, "The great Dr. Mason once said there were three men who prayed as if they were immediately inspired from heaven. One was Rowland Hill, the other was a certain layman, and the third was Dr. Milledoler. Sprague, in his excellent *Annals of the American Reformed Pul-*

pit, p. 110-1, says, "Such prayers as his [Dr. Milledoler's], I never heard. They subdued—they rapt—they brought you in the presence-chamber of Heaven, where a saint was pleading and a child of God was holding communion with his father, and a sweet awe fell upon you as you were led to the mercy-seat, and saw the Divine Mediator there, and the propitiated Answerer of prayer. It was once said to me by an eminent pastor of this city [New York], that it seemed to him "as if Dr. Milledoler had been given to the Church for the express purpose of teaching ministers how to pray. I could imagine nothing more appropriate or impressive [than Milledoler's prayers]—there was no appearance even of premeditation—it seemed as if he had only to open his lips, and a stream of the purest, sublimest devotion came gushing forth."

Dr. Milledoler was the pastor of the Rutgers Street Presbyterian Church in New York city, 1805-13, during the time that the Hopkinsian controversy was raging there. He stubbornly combatted the Hopkinsian innovations, and in 1813 accepted a call to the Collegiate Reformed Church, largely on account of the divisions in the Presbyterian Church caused by that controversy. Sprague's Annals, p. 107. It is remarkable that both Drs. Ferris and Milledoler left the Presbyterian Church on account of Hopkinsianism prevailing there, and that they joined the Reformed Church to escape the contagion. These two uncompromising foes of Hopkinsianism in the Presbyterian Church, later, when in the Reformed Dutch Church, from the start, took the strongest ground against the Seceders of 1822. This fact furnishes the strongest evidence that the charge of Hopkinsian errors brought against the Reformed Church by Dr. Fraeligh and the Seceders, was practically without merit. In fact, Dr. Ferris wrote the Synod resolutions against the Seceders in 1824, and Milledoler preached and reported against them,

and openly accused them of collecting all the heresies in the calendar, labeling them Hopkinsianism, and then hurling them broadcast without discrimination as heresies in the Reformed Church. It is evident that Dr. Milledoler was more afraid of the Antinomianism of the Fraeligh faction than of any other heresy.

XIV. REPORT ON THE SECESSION OF 1822

ADDRESS of a Commission of General Synod to the Ministers, Officers, and other Members of the Reformed Dutch Church, and especially to the Ministers and Churches of the Secession.

ADDRESS
1824

Brethren—When divisions occur in a church which produce unsanctified passions, and end in the violent rending asunder of Christian bonds and fellowship, they ought, like the breaking out and raging of fire in a populous city, to be regarded as a public calamity; and at such times it becomes the duty of every person, and especially of those more immediately connected with such church, to do every thing in their power to check, and, if possible, to arrest its devastating course. Such division has unhappily occurred in our own Reformed Church; and the time has arrived when her members are called to institute a serious inquiry into its origin, its progress, its results, and into the duty of those who either participate in, or witness, its movements.

A small number of ministers, elders and deacons, members of the Reformed Dutch Church, convened at Schraalenburgh, N. J., in the autumn of 1822, for the purpose of organizing themselves into an ecclesiastical body, entirely distinguished from and independent of said church.

We are sorry to recognize at the head of that secession a minister of the gospel, venerable for his years

and standing; one in whom the church had formerly reposed high confidence, and to whom under God she was rather entitled to look up as her counsellor and defender, than to contemplate as her accuser and judge. With this gentleman were associated several ministers not in good standing, for they were then under sentence of deposition from the sacred office. By them and their associates, an instrument of writing was proposed, adopted, and subscribed, the object of which was to state, and to justify, the reasons of their secession. On that instrument we must offer some remarks.

The occasion of that address is too serious to admit an examination of its merits as a literary production; we shall therefore only generally observe, that for the want of accurate arrangement of its matter, we have had no small trouble in collating and exhibiting its contents in their proper places.

To notice everything contained in that instrument, would indeed be unprofitable; we shall, therefore, principally confine ourselves to its more general outlines.

After an introduction, showing in what case secession from a corrupt church may be justified, and applying the whole stream of observation, without justice or mercy, to our Reformed Church, the authors, that they may fasten upon her the charge of such corruption, proceed to lay down the marks of a true church, in the following particulars, viz.:

1. That the pure doctrine of the Gospel be preached therein.

2. That she maintain the pure administration of the sacraments, as instituted by Christ.

3. That church discipline be exercised in punishing of sin.

To these are added, that all things must be managed according to the pure Word of God; all things contrary thereto rejected; and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only head of the church.

To the first three marks, and that part of the last which requires that Jesus Christ be acknowledged as the only head of the church, we do, with the authors of this instrument, most cordially subscribe. But they go further, and demand absolute perfection as an additional mark;—from this we are constrained to dissent. The experience of the whole world, nay, the Word of God itself, painfully, yet incontrovertibly proves, that all human, and even divine institutions, so far as they are administered by men, are imperfect and fallible; and for any man, or set of men, on earth, to arrogate to themselves infallibility, betrays both ignorance and presumption. This mark, if rigidly construed, as appears to be intended, would not leave a single true church of Jesus Christ upon the earth.

But let us now see how these marks are applied to our church, to show her apostasy.

"A serious attention," say they, on page 6 of their printed proceedings, "to the state of that body called the Reformed Dutch Church, as it now exists, and comparing it with these marks, will discover a departure of that body from its adopted standards." And they say again, on page 9, "We now turn to a statement of melancholy facts, in relation to the judicatures of that body, from which it will be seen, that it has lost its soundness for doctrine, and become deeply tainted with error."

And what are these facts? We seek them in vain in the place where they ought to have appeared; but near the close of the instrument, we find them intermingled and entangled with other matters in deep confusion.

The first that is adduced, is the case of the Rev. Conrad Ten Eyck.

That gentleman was charged with having advocated the doctrine of general atonement; that charge was, in the first instance, brought before the Classis of Montgomery, and eventually before General Synod in 1820. By that Synod Mr. Ten Eyck's opinions, as expressed in his printed defense, were decidedly disapproved and

condemned, and he received their public reproof. But, inasmuch as from his explanation—that though the atonement of Christ was, in itself, of infinite value, yet that he died savingly only for the elect—and as from other expressions, and his whole deportment, on that occasions, Synod had reason to believe that he was conscious of having acted unadvisedly and imprudently, they did judge that there was not sufficient ground for his suspension. If Mr. Ten Eyck deceived the Synod, as has been asserted, then he may also, in the same manner, have previously deceived the Classis of Montgomery; but if Mr. Ten Eyck, and a majority of the Classis of Montgomery, concurred in deceiving the Synod, upon them, and upon them only, lies the dishonor of so doing. If Mr. Ten Eyck has relapsed into his former course, he is still accountable; but as no representation of that fact, if it exists, has ever been brought before Synod, the Reformed Church, as such, certainly stands acquitted, in this instance, from all blame. If Synod, after what has passed in the case of Mr. Ten Eyck, refused to arraign before them his alleged associates, there was sufficient reason for so doing; for if Mr. Ten Eyck himself was not convicted before Synod, it would have been perfect trifling to have arraigned before them his associates.

The charge against Synod, of tolerating and countenancing men who advocate the doctrines of indefinite atonement and natural ability, can no more be sustained than those which have preceded it.

There are, so far as we know, but few individuals in the Reformed Dutch Church, who are supposed to incline to those doctrines, and these appear cautious of avowing it. Must the church then be driven to the alternative, of either organizing a court of inquisition to try her suspected members, or be herself calumniated as apostate? Has she not warned her people again and again against these very errors, and unequivocally and fully condemned such errors? And if, like her Lord, she has exercised long suffering and forbearance, is she therefore worthy of the foul names

applied to her of "harlot and adulteress?" But she has rejected a motion, it is said, for calling a general convention to define her doctrine of the atonement; but can the Reformed Dutch Church acknowledge that her doctrines are so obscure as to need such definition? And if such convention were called, what could they possibly say, that would be more full, or more explicit, than is already stated in her standards?

The last charge brought against our church, under this head, in this list of charges, is that of deposing her ministers for no other crime, but that they could not in conscience associate with men who advocate Hopkinsian errors. The whole truth of this matter is, that the ministers alluded to were deposed from their offices, not for maintaining truth against error, but for insubordination to the constituted authorities of the church; and for such insubordination, too, as placed their best friends in a situation in which it was impossible for them to justify their conduct. Had they suffered, acting correctly in the cause of righteousness, there are many, very many, that would have shielded them from harm; but in the course they saw fit to pursue, it could not possibly be done. They have reaped the fruits of their own doings, and must principally blame themselves for all the consequences that have ensued. Those who will read the minutes of General Synod for the years 1820, will perceive the source of all the evils in this case, now charged upon the church at large.

Intermingled with the charges we have now considered, and which concern the alleged heresy of our church, there are others which relate to supposed incorrect decisions in different judicatories of the church, on various subjects, and at different times, which, as they have little or no bearing on the point before us, we shall pass in silence.

The second mark laid down in this instrument as designating the true church, is, that she maintain the pure administration of the sacraments, as instituted by Christ; but as this mark in the discussion is blended

with the third concerning discipline, we shall take them, and answer them together.

Some of the charges of corruption brought forward against the Reformed Dutch Church, under these heads, are the following:

"That there is a prevailing prostitution of the sacraments, by almost indiscriminate administration, without any regard to qualification; that most of the churches are composed of members, the most of whom are so far from manifesting evidences of true faith and piety, that they are not only ignorant of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion contained in their standards, and in which they pride themselves, but are their avowed enemies; that parents present children for baptism, not only without knowledge of the nature of that ordinance, or evidence of faith or piety, or even of morality, but often such as are grossly wicked; that whole churches, with perhaps a few solitary exceptions, are composed of ignorant, prayerless, wicked, baptized members, who are, under these circumstances, admitted to sealing ordinances, and recognized as members in full communion; that ministers attempting reformation are branded with opprobrious names, hated, despitefully used, driven away or starved, whilst those who please the ignorant, the vulgar, and the wicked, are held in popular esteem, and well provided for; that the judicatories of the church are made up for the most part of ignorant and impious men, who have not the fear of God before their eyes; and that many young men destitute of the renewing grace of God, and deriving their notions of religion from what they have been wont to see and hear in the lapsed churches, betake themselves to the study of divinity, and obtain admittance to the office of the sacred ministry."

This is a small specimen of the spirit that reigns in that production under these heads; and we are here presented with a long series of assertions and charges, without specification or proof, from which every sensible mind, and every feeling heart, must recoil with

horror. Imperfection is indeed stamped upon our holiest things; and the Reformed Dutch Church, like other churches, has many things to deplore. But here are things charged to her, without discrimination and without restraint, so bitter, so extravagant, so overcharged, and every way so incredible, that they carry their own refutation upon the very face of them. Assertions like these, deserve only, and need only, from the very nature of the case, to be answered by denial of their truth; and if any person will read that production, from near the close of the sixth to the nineth page, and does not perceive the justice of our remarks, we can only say that we certainly do not envy either his intellect or his feelings.

Charges like these come, indeed, with very ill grace from those who have been, perhaps, as deficient as almost any of their neighbors, in some of those very things for which they now criminate them. Physician, heal thyself, will certainly apply here with emphasis; and if these men had first put their own houses in order, they might have labored with much better face, and with much greater effect, in the cause of general reformation.

We have now closed the list of "melancholy facts," adduced to show the extreme corruption of the Reformed Dutch Church; and what, when stripped of verbosity and unsupported allegation, is the amount of testimony that remains? It may all be easily and faithfully presented to view, in the following short summary, viz.:

That some ministers and members in the Reformed Dutch Church are believed to incline to the doctrines of general atonement and natural ability; that she has, from time to time, protested against these and similar heresies, but has not done all that she might have done to counteract them, and that there is room, and, in some places, perhaps, much room, for the more faithful exercise of discipline.

When these charges are analyzed, this appears to be about the substance of every thing they contain, and

surely of everything that is susceptible of proof.

Now, supposing all this to be true, *is it sufficient to justify secession?* May not similar things be said, and with equal force, of any other church in our country, and perhaps of any other church in the world?

We have confined our remarks to the instrument of separation, because it is a kind of official document, and may fairly be considered as covering the whole ground of objection. As for minor productions on the subject, we consider them as not requiring notice.

Yet these things, as thus stated and answered, are considered by the secession as sufficient to justify such secession with all its horrible consequences.

We use strong language in describing these consequences; but if the effects produced by the secession on some of our churches be considered, it will not be found, we apprehend, too strong for the occasion. Nothing effectual can be done by the leaders of this secession, unless they can persuade the people to go with them; and it will be difficult to persuade the people to go with them, unless they can be induced to believe that the state of our church is so deplorable and so hopeless that no good man can any longer remain in it. Now here arises the great temptation, in some instances, to conceal the truth, and in others to misrepresent and distort occurring facts and circumstances. Two very lamentable instances of this are of recent date.

General Synod having been informed in their late secession [June, 1824] at New York, that a public meeting of the congregation at West New Hempsted had been called for the purpose of effecting a separation of that church from their jurisdiction, appointed a committee to attend said meeting, with certified communications from Synod of facts highly important to be known by that people before they proceeded to act. When the commissioners arrived at the spot, they found a majority of the consistory determined to prevent such communication, and it was not without great difficulty and persevering interference of some of the

spirited and independent members of that church, that they could even have a hearing. The commissioners found also, that a printed paper, detailing some of the most extravagant speculations of Hopkinsianism, and such as we verily believe no minister in the Dutch Church ever did or ever will subscribe, had on a preceding Sabbath been publicly read from the pulpit, and contrasted with the doctrines of the Reformed Dutch Church. All the circumstances of this case undeniably prove that the impression intended to be made upon the people by that publication was, that a large majority of the Dutch Church were either infected with these errors, or at least entirely disposed to countenance and to cherish them.

The second instance, and which for the honor of religion, if the act had not been public, and the present call for its exposure was not so imperious, might, for us, have passed into everlasting oblivion, was exemplified in the conduct of Dr. Fraeligh himself.

After having been officially notified that a large and respectable committee had been deputed by Synod to meet the Classis of Paramus on the sixth of July, in the church of Hackensack, for the purposes of friendly conference, and of restoring if possible peace and good order to the churches of that region, Dr. Fraeligh and his consistories not only absented themselves from said meeting, but that gentleman did, as we are credibly informed, publicly denounce said commission from the pulpits of the churches of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, stating, in substance, that they were approaching to break their peace, scatter, and destroy; intimating his desire that neither man, woman, or child might, even from motives of curiosity, attend said meeting; and, to crown all, did also, with concurrence of his consistory, set apart Monday, the fifth of July, the day immediately preceding that of the meeting of the commission, as a day of solemn fasting and prayer, requesting the people to convene on that day at the church of Schraalenburgh, to offer supplication to God that He

might defeat the designs of, and prepare them to meet, their enemies.

Enemies! And who were their enemies? Could the commissioners of General Synod, sent forth as ministers of reconciliation, be their enemies? And would Dr. Fraeligh proclaim a fast to meet these enemies?

How did that gentleman dare to appeal to Heaven in such a case? How could he thus awfully trifle with a holy ordinance of God? The facts here stated constitute one of the most extraordinary occurrences we have ever witnessed, and we want words to express our views of the heinousness of the whole transaction.

Can acts like these endure trial of the Word of God; or can they possibly be perpetrated without guilt?

If representations like these are made in our churches with effect, by what strong delusion must the people be misled, and what awful passions must be engendered? How will parents be excited against their children, and children against their parents, husbands against their wives, and wives against their husbands, and how will the most effectionate friends and neighbors be drawn out against each other, in ever widening difference? Yes, in this case, we must see ties broken, which have hitherto bound in holy friendship disciples of the same Lord, and expectants of the same glory. We must see congregations broken to pieces, and the regular administration of the word and ordinances prevented by the feebleness of conflicting factions. We must see altar set against altar, the peace of neighborhoods disturbed, the ordinary civilities of life refused, domestic harmony interrupted, and members of the same spiritual household, not only indulging in fearful denunciations, but in all the perpetuated bitterness of strife. "Thus biting and devouring one another," must "they not be consumed one of another?" This picture, we believe, is not overcharged; in its incipient outlines it is already visible. Nor can the leaders of the secession, after having scattered their firebrands, tell where these will lodge, or what evils they will produce; nor can they themselves arrest the fire when it burns, or

mark out the limits, either in time or extent, beyond which it shall cease to rage.

Under these circumstances is it not their duty to pause? If they have erred,—and erred they certainly have, and that most grievously,—ought they not to repent? To err is human; to acknowledge error when committed, noble; to forsake it, sacred, imperious, bounden, Christian duty.

We would earnestly call the attention of these brethren, and of all the churches of that region, to a serious perusal of the discourse preceding this address; and especially to those parts of it in which Christ, and His Apostles, and the Synod speak. We entreat them also to remember, that, although we have reproved them, we have not therefore become their enemies. Our heart's desire and prayer to God for that branch of our Israel, is, that it may still be saved.

Brethren, remember, that as you cannot be borne out in this act by the judgment of God, so you are not likely to be borne out in it, even in the judgment of wise and good men. The public Christian sentiment will be against you, and that sentiment ought never to be despised. By adhering to your present course, you will open a wide door for the birth and play of the most malevolent passions of the human heart; open the mouth of enemies to blaspheme; offend God; grieve the godly; gratify the spirit of discord; and procure for yourselves grief and dishonor, deep, lasting, and, perhaps, eternal.

That Synod and Commission whom you have deemed your enemies, have been so far from manifesting a hostile disposition towards you, that they have done everything that men could do, without weakness or dishonor, to attract your confidence; they have still left open an honorable door of reconciliation, and still hope it may not have been done in vain.

To the members and other worshippers in our churches of that region, we would say, get light before you act in this secession; and if criminations are ut-

tered against our church, ask, for it is your right, for good substantial proof of their truth.

It is easy to rail, and to find fault, but we trust you have learned of Christ. Remember, that for all your acts in this case, you are responsible to Heaven, and must one day, with ourselves, render in your account.

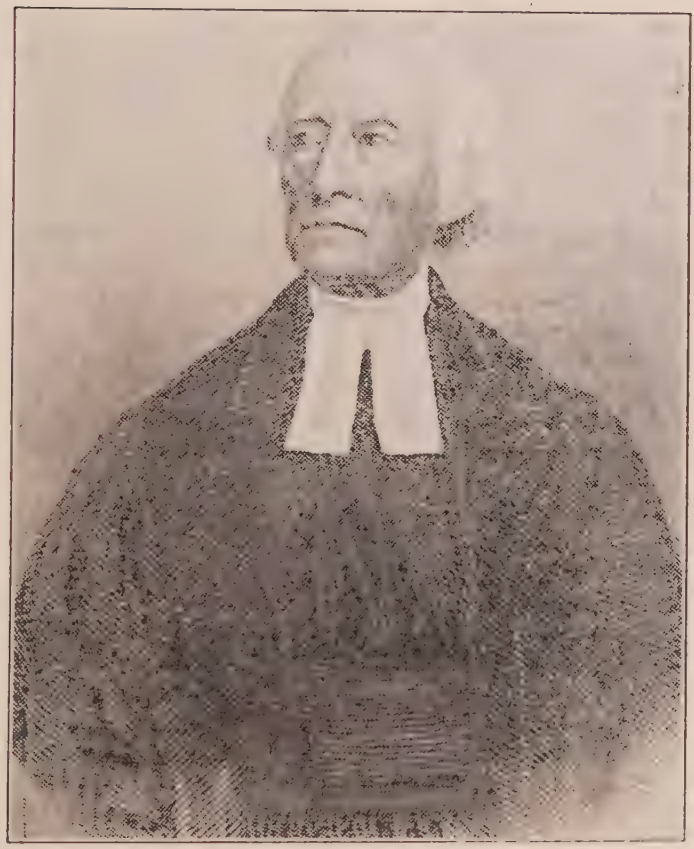
Remember, also, "That though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though we have all faith, so that we could remove mountains; and though we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and even give our bodies to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth nothing," I Cor. XIII. "Let all bitterness, therefore, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as [we hope that] God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you," Eph. IV, 31.

To the ministers, officers, and members of our churches generally, we would say, let us endeavor to draw good out of this evil. Let us institute a rigid inquiry into our own state, as well as into that of our respective churches. Let us guard the truth, guard the rising generation, and guard our discipline; and where we have done wrong, let us hasten in the fear and in the strength of God, to correct it.

Let us offer, especially, our fervent prayer to the Almighty God, that he may be propitious to our churches; that He may pour out His Holy Spirit, bind in stronger love our ministers and people, keep them from dissensions, turn the hearts of our offending brethren, and glorify himself exceedingly, not only by filling all Heaven, but the whole earth, also, with His glory.

Published by order of the Commission.

PHILIP MILLEDOLER,
JOHN KNOX,
ABM. VAN NEST,
Sub Committee.



REV. PHILIP MILLEDOLER, D. D.

XV. GENERAL SYNOD HOLDING THE BALANCE-ROD

IN ADDITION to the acts of the General Synod relative to the Antinomian controversy between Ten Eyck and others, and the other acts of the Synod before quoted, on questions of doctrine, the following are deemed important:

October, 1820, the Synod took the following action:

"Resolved, That the Word of God, and the standards of this Church, teach us, that the Lord Jesus Christ, died as an atoning sacrifice, only for those whom the Father has given Him; for whom, in the divine love and wisdom, He became the substituted victim.

"Resolved, That Conrad Ten Eyck's former opinions on the subject of the atonement, as contained in his printed defense, meet our decided disapprobation.

"Whereas, it has been repeatedly alleged, on the floor of this Synod, that some of its members have denied the infinite value and sufficiency of the death of Christ, to expiate the sins of the whole world; and whereas, the expression of the sense of Synod on this subject, at this time, is deemed important; therefore,

"Resolved, That it is the sense of this house, that the death of Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice and satisfaction, is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world; but, that this infinite value, and dignity of the death of Jesus Christ, is solely derived from the considerations mentioned in the fourth article, under the second head of doctrine, in the Canons, and from none other."

Article four, second head, Canons of Dort, reads:

"This death derives its infinite value and dignity

from these considerations: because the person who submitted to it was not only really man, and perfectly holy, but also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and Holy Spirit, which qualifications were necessary to constitute him a Savior for us; and because it was attended with a sense of the wrath and curse of God to us for sin."

June, 1824, relative to the flood of rationalistic literature in the Eastern States, for which the Seceders of 1822 seem to have held the Reformed Dutch Church responsible, the Synod said:

"Whereas, certain publications have issued from the press, and have been circulated in many parts of the Reformed Dutch Church, denying the doctrines of the eternal generation of the Son of God, of the total inability and depravity of man, of the definite nature of the atonement of Jesus Christ, as being a sacrifice for the sins of His people, and the usefulness and binding obligations of creeds and confessions of faith, and

"Whereas, it has been frequently averred (especially by members of the late secession), that such erroneous doctrines are now tolerated in the Reformed Dutch Church, and

"Whereas, such publications are calculated to foment the unhappy spirit now existing in many parts of the church, to increase the dissensions of its members, and alienate still further the minds of the adherents of the secession, and

"Whereas, it is deemed important that the General Synod at its present session should express a definite opinion on these subjects; therefore,

"Resolved, That while this Synod totally disapproves of the late secesssion, and of all the means that have been employed to promote it, it does decidedly disown and condemn any such doctrines (before recited) set forth in such publications, and the doctrines commonly called Hopkinsian, as being contrary to the Word of God; and, at the same time, as decidedly condemns the course pursued by ministers and members

of the late secession, who, by their publications and conversation, and other measures, have endeavored to establish the belief that such are the views of the Reformed Dutch Church, which views [imputations] this Synod unequivocally pronounces altogether calumnious."

In a Pastoral Letter of June, 1824, the following is found:

"Beloved brethren, are there some, who bear the name of Christ, who are sons of strife,—fomenters of discord and schism,—come ye out from among them, be ye of one heart and one mind,—in unity of affection and effort is strength and success. Are any carried away with every wind of doctrine? Be ye strong and immovable in the truth. In this day of party feeling, we consider it our duty to exhort you to cherish and maintain the doctrines of our publicly adopted standards, in subordination to the Word of God. We assure you that these are now as they have ever been, the true expression of the faith of the Dutch Church. And though some of this day, to answer sinister purposes, may represent a conscientious attachment to and defense of the truth as bigotry, know this, that the abiding peace of a well settled conscience, and a sound and intelligent faith, is of infinitely more worth to you, than either the smiles of any man, or any set of men.

"Are any boasting the correctness and orthodoxy of their faith, while great want of the practical details of Christian duty, and a departure from moral principle, show the heresy of their hearts? Be ye careful and anxious, that the orthodoxy of your faith be seen in the holiness of your lives."

There was at this time a terrible war on in the Eastern States between orthodoxy and rationalism, and it was a task to prevent orthodox people from veering into the opposite extreme of Antinomianism. This latter tendency had made Dr. Fraeligh's churches by 1826-28 probably the corruptest in the land, for they tried to show the orthodoxy of their

faith in pure doctrine, no matter how leprous the life. It is very evident that the Reformed Dutch Synod had had a hard task to maintain a correct balance between the discordant extremes in her midst; and that she partially failed is evident from Fraeligh's secession in 1822. The Synod, however, re-declared correct Reformed doctrine, almost in the exact words of the Standards; but she also re-declared correct Reformed practice, and she insisted on showing the orthodoxy of faith, not in pure doctrine and a corrupt life, but in correct doctrine manifested also in the holiness of life.

The State Church of Holland deposed Rev. De Cock in 1834-5 for defending Reformed truth against two rationalists, and the other leaders of the Dutch Secession were deposed for violating the government-made Church Rules of 1816; while, in 1822, Solomon Fraeligh and his adherents forced themselves to secede because they failed to force the Reformed Dutch Church to remove the old landmarks of faith of the Fathers. And the Reformed Dutch Church finally deposed the leaders of that secession, not for preaching Reformed doctrine, but for preaching and practicing heterodoxy. "Show the orthodoxy of your faith," the Reformed Synod said, "in the holiness of your lives, and not in the holiness of doctrine alone."

If the Synod of The Hague in the State Church had re-declared Reformed doctrine in 1835, as the Reformed Church in America did in 1817-24, and had repealed the Rules of 1816, and gone back to the Rules of 1568-1619,—the position of the Reformed Church in America never deserted,—would not Brummelkamp, Van Velzen, Van Raalte, Scholte and Gezelle Meerburg have made the Holland of 1835 ring with joy? And would they not then have served even in the State Church, with gladness all their lives, as they could certainly have done in the Reformed Dutch Church in America without let or hindrance, all the time from 1620 till the present time?

In the State Church in Holland, since 1800, some

real religious tragedies were enacted. Poets like De Genestet sang religious Holland to sleep, and rationalists like Rev. Zaalberg, Prof. Hofstede de Groot, and the Groninger School, claimed, in dead earnest, that they were delivering Holland from the shackles of superstition, and were merely doing the work of Luther and Calvin on a higher plane. They claimed the right to teach and preach rationalistic doctrine in the Netherlands Reformed Church, as if that were the real nineteenth century gospel of Christ. The orthodox people in that Church were forced to bear all this, or to secede. The fight was determined and terrible on both sides. In Amsterdam, where the rationalists had been in control for years, the devoted believers in the old doctrines, with their harps on the willows, complaining "they have taken away the Lord, and we do not know where they have laid Him." were, in 1851, startled by the call of Rev. Hasebroek of Rotterdam to Amsterdam. The report spread like wild fire, and the faithful shook hands and shed tears of joy. The call was accepted, and whenever Hasebroek was announced to preach, people in Amsterdam crowded around the church two hours before the doors were opened, and filled the building to overflowing, to hear the doctrine of free grace once more. And again, in 1870, when Dr. Kuyper of Utrecht accepted the call to Amsterdam, whenever Kuyper officiated, the scenes of 1851 repeated and surpassed themselves. The whole trouble in Holland was that, since 1816, the Reformed Churches were not any longer autonomous, and they were not allowed to legislate for themselves any more. They had become a part of a State machine, supported by taxation, and dependent upon the State in every way. Rationalists claimed, and obtained, protection because the Church was the Volks Kerk, the national Church. If there had been no State control to complicate the situation, the problem would have been simplified, and probably solved by this time.

In America, however, the Reformed Churches were and are autonomous and free to legislate for them-

selves. No government protects rationalists in the church here. No instances, like those at Amsterdam in 1851 and 1870, were necessary here, for the local churches were free to be as orthodox as the Scriptures required, without lordship of any kind. Every comparison made by the Western Seceders between the State Church in Holland and the American Reformed Church was, therefore, vicious, and based on an erroneous conception of facts. If any comparison is permitted at all in this matter, it is that the differences among the Hollanders in the West, including those about the Eastern Church, are comparable to the differences which existed among the Seceders in Holland, and which had been imported from the old country. It is sheer ignorance to liken the Reformed Church in America to the State Church of Holland; and the idea that Meerburg, Brummelkamp, Van Raalte, and even Van Velzen, would have seceded from the Reformed Church in 1857, on the points raised by the Seceders in 1857, cannot be maintained, for these clergymen knew Reformed doctrine and practice of the past 300 years too well. Remonstrants and rationalists were in control in Holland in 1835, and, what is worse, threw these orthodox leaders out of the church. In the American Church, rationalists were never in control, and did not exist in that Church, and no orthodox clergymen or members were ever cast out of that Church on account of their orthodoxy.

The secession in the West in 1857 was a brand-new invention of some of the Seceders in Holland after 1835, imported into Michigan, and having as its basis a false foundation, consisting of the idea that differences about emphasizing certain doctrines, and differences in viewing Church Rules, constituted the line between the true and the false church—a notion unscriptural, and heterodox in the extreme.

The right to leave a church, and even to start another denomination under certain circumstances, may be conceded; but the right to declare the Reformed Dutch Church in 1857 a corrupt and false church, and

to secede from her on the points alleged by the Seceders of 1857, with the claim that the Seceders thereby remained true Reformed Church, was, under recognized Reformed doctrine and practice, but little short of an ecclesiastical crime.

In the State Church of Holland a State-made synod wielded a sceptre of oppression. In the American Reformed Church, a general synod, composed of autonomous local churches, held the balance-rod, and thus endeavored to avoid the dangerous extremes which have from time to time disgraced ecclesiastical history, and to maintain the golden mean in doctrine and practice. The General Synod of the Reformed Church insisted that the clergymen should rightly divide the word of truth. The General Synod labored hard to prevent the doctrine of predestination of Reformed Churches from becoming what the Seceders had made of it—an opiate administered by the flesh and the devil, drawminds away from all piety and religion, making God the author of sin, and people carnally secure, since nothing can hinder the salvation of the elect, and the works of saints cannot aid the reprobate, and many other things of the same kind, which Reformed Churches not only do not acknowledge, but even detest with their whole soul.

XVI. FAR HENCE UNTO THE GENTILES

AS WAS to be expected, humanly speaking, there were in the Reformed Dutch Church some who entertained rather Antinomian ideas, and had a decided slant against foreign missions. These people overstated the doctrine of election and irresistible grace so far as to lose sight of other important truths in the Bible. And this, together with the tendency to independentism, fostered during the Revolution, caused some wrangling in the assemblies of the Church. The spirit of lawlessness was strong. While there was no trouble about Arminianism until about 1820, yet the contentions of the Coetus-Conferentie were not completely silenced. For years after the union in 1771, several churches in the Hudson valley had refused to join, and when they did join, the spirit of independence was in the air. Elders, and sometimes clergymen, would become a law unto themselves and leave the classis or synods without permission. Often, too, when a matter had been voted on, the discussion still proceeded, sometimes without due order or decency. In 1790 the question of absenting members was considered by the General Synod; in 1800, the rights of protesting members were recognized, but "such members must not withdrawn from the jurisdiction, as there is also a law of self-preservation"; in 1813 something is said about intemperate, personal, unwarranted aspersions, etc., against the dignity of the supreme tribunal of the Church, and insubordination was condemned; and in 1814, it was again the rights of protesting members. The matter finally came to a crisis, when Revs. Jones and Amerman attacked the Standards of Dort

in classes and synods, and in print, for which they were disciplined; and in 1822, they broke away with Dr. Fraeligh and a few others, in open independency. Gradually better order prevailed; but in 1833, the Church, in revising the Constitution, included a provision against protests in its meetings when a question had been voted on. This rule, designed to prevent disorder in the assemblies, had a salutary effect. It left the way of appeal, in an orderly manner, as wide open as ever. This good law might have been worded differently, for, years afterward, among the Hollanders in Michigan, the Seceders used this rule against protest in meetings as a denial of both protest in meeting after a matter had been disposed of, and of protest by way of appeal. However, the rule, leaving the right of appeal intact, silenced those who turned the meetings of the church into debating societies, and it cut off harangues and recriminations from the councils of the church, without interfering with the regular right of appeal. The growing influence of Rutgers and Union Colleges, and of the Seminary at New Brunswick, as well as the elimination of the extreme independents in the Secession of 1822, made the Reformed Church, in the early thirties, one of the best ordered churches in the land, as the Princeton professors admitted. It is certain that the elimination of the adherents of Dr. Fraeligh in 1822, diminished the influence of the passive Antinomian element in the Reformed Dutch Church so perceptibly that it was of material assistance in paving the way for a more active participation in the work of evangelizing heathen lands. It made straight the way for the victory for Foreign Missions achieved in the General Synod in 1830.

The progress of the work for Foreign Missions in the Eastern States had been retarded by the indifference and worldliness engendered by the War for Independence, as the records of that time plainly reveal, and there are in the records of the Reformed Church many references that very well show this state of religion in the Eastern part of the country. In 1792, a

day of prayer and fasting was appointed, on account of the "prostrate state of the Church of God, and the dearth and deadness of Jehovah's people." In 1820, a committee, Dr. Milledoler chairman, reported "many in our churches are yet unconverted, under the curse of God, and exposed to eternal wrath." There are several similar expressions that bear the cast of a sterner time than the present, and while the Synod talks of walking about Zion, and telling her towers, there are, sometimes, also many glances within the walls of Zion. All the way from 1792, there are the minor tones of sadness over failures and mistakes. The reports on the state of the Church are often a good antidote against boasting; but through them runs the blend of an irresistible missionary fervor. The absence, indeed, of criticism and complaint would have been a certain sign of decay, and it is unfortunately true that all that were of Israel were not Israel, even in the Reformed Church. He who is without sin must throw the first stones.

In spite of the languishing state of religion in the Atlantic States for years after the Revolutionary War, however, the Reformed Church had already started some twenty mission churches in Canada and Kentucky; but it was not until 1830, that decisive steps toward foreign missions were taken. In 1823, a request came from the "Salts of St. Mary" for a missionary, a call which, no doubt, resulted in the response of one of the New Brunswick graduates, Rev. Wm. M. Ferry, to go to Mackinac Island. (This Rev. Ferry later settled at Grand Haven, Michigan, and became the friend of Dr. Van Raalte in 1847.) In 1824, African colonization was discussed. A few years later, a committee was ordered sent to old Holland, to solicit funds for the college and seminary, and to acquire information as to church affairs, etc., in the Old Country. But in 1835, conditions had improved so much, "That our Reformed Dutch Zion is eminently qualified by intelligence, piety and wealth, to send missionaries to the foreign fields," and the Synod asks,

"Shall Rev. Abeel return weeping and broken-hearted to the dying millions of the east?" Rev. Abeel had already visited China (1829), Java (1830), Siam (1831) and had returned in 1834 from a visit to Holland, after arranging for missions in Java and Borneo. He preached before the General Synod the annual mission sermon on Isaiah 54:2, "Spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes," and had visited the Reformed Dutch Churches in the interest of missions. In 1838 he was in China; in 1841-2 in Borneo, and in Amoy in 1842-5, whence he returned broken in health. Rev. David Abeel was the globe-trotter for the American Mission Board, and he, with Noel, started in London in 1835 the Society for Female Education in the Orient. He was the best known foreign missionary of his day. His journals and works were known all over American and Europe, and he reflected great credit on the Reformed Dutch Church. The Reformed Dutch Church published his "Residence in China and Neighboring Countries," in 1836, and Rev. Williamson's Memoirs of Abeel in 1848. Rev. Abeel and his works were well known by the reading public in the Netherlands.

John Scudder labored in India and Ceylon since 1819, and Daniel Lindley in South Africa. When Scudder laid down his life in South Africa, while on the way to India in 1855, he said, "My last request to the Dutch Church is that they may live and labor and pray for the salvation of a lost world, and that they may bring up their children for this great object."

The following extract from Rev. Dwight's report on Missions in 1835 shows the nature, extent, and zeal of the Missionary spirit of this Calvinistic Reformed Church in those days:- "Shall we be satisfied with rearing temples and awakening songs of praise within the narrow limits of our land, and refuse to make Hindustan and China tributary to our God? It is a mistaken idea that sending the provisions of the gospel abroad, is spreading famine within our own doors. The heart that is open to the wants of the stranger is

usually the one that provides most liberally for its own household. Reason assures us of such a result, and we are warranted in the expectation of it by the promise of God, 'If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not, and they that shall be of thee, shall build the waste places. Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.' * * * The inhabitants of the heathen world are climbing the highest hills to catch the first tints that brighten the distant mountains, those suffering mortals are on their watch towers, looking with eager eyes for the dawning of that day which is to scatter the darkness of that moral night which has so long enshrouded them. Watchman, what of the night? Say ye to them the morning cometh, and go scatter the light of heavenly truth among them.

Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high—
Shall we to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny?'"

A year later, 1836, Rev. Hutton's eloquent report reflects the high missionary spirit in the churches, and refers to sending out "the advance guard of the Dutch Church to the dark shores of heathenism." And what a guard it was! A few months before Dr. Van Raalte and his little band were welcomed, in 1846, at New York and Albany, Rev. Wyckoff had preached the funeral sermon over the remains of Rev. Abeel, who, on Sept. 5, 1846, had fallen a martyr to the cause of missions; and a month before Rev. Scholte sailed into Boston harbor in May, 1847, Rev. J. V. N. Talmage and his party had sailed out, Amoy-bound. But ten years earlier, in 1836, David Abeel's advance guard, Ennis, Doty, Nevius, Youngblood and Miss Condit left for Borneo; in 1838 Pohlman and Thomson followed, and in 1841, Isaac Stryker. The reports, letters, and jour-

nals of those heralds of the cross in "the islands of the sea," and the stories of their hardships and sacrifies, still further fired the heart of the Church with missionary zeal. Stryker, on his way from Java to Borneo, died at Singapore, and lies buried there, "in a pleasant morning-side cemetery with his feet to the foe." Mrs. Thomson died at Batavia, and the second wife of Thomson, with three children, lies at Pontianak, in Borneo, while he, after great labors in translating into Dyak the gospels and hymns, worn out in body, but with heart and soul in Borneo, died at Berne, Switzerland. Youngblood returned in 1849, broken down. With funds on hand, but no reinforcements arriving, so hard was the field that the mission was closed, after a touching farewell to his schools and his beloved Dyak field. Pohlman and Doty went from Borneo to Amoy in 1844; Mrs. Doty and the second Mrs. Doty died in the foreign field, while Pohlman was drowned on the way from Hongkong to Amoy. And so goes the story of these trail-blazers of Missions. There is no more eloquent evidence of the Christian activities of the Reformed Dutch Church of those days, than that furnished by her mission enterprises. The little mission cemetery on Kolongzu, near Amoy, tells the story of her missionary families who laid down their lives for others.

This advance-guard was followed by others to China, India, Japan and Arabia, and the end is not yet. Whole brigades of Scudders, Talmages, Chamberlains, Zwemers, and Pieters, went to the foreign fields from those Reformed Churches. True enough, these undertakings presented strange and difficult problems, sorrows and disappointments; but, when the Reformed Dutch Church began to labor "on the dark shores of heathenism," she "found her soul." She joined Emanuel's army, even though she carried in that army only a Benjamin's banner. It was her faith working through love, which is one of the distinctive features of the Calvinistic or Reformed doctrine. This Church, with the floods of infidelity and liberalism going over and

around her, heard the call, and began to go "far hence unto the Gentiles." But the more she emptied herself for others, the stronger seemed to become her hold at home; and while the deluge of Unitarianism was threatening, and myriads of foreigners were actually beleaguering them, these fortresses of Reformed faith clung to their Mohawk, Hudson, and Raritan holds, right in the path of the advancing foes not only, but they even carried the good tidings to the open shores of the heathen world in India, China and Japan. Considering the attacks of liberalism of all kinds, and especially the crowding of foreign elements among her own people, it is marvelous that this Church was not swept away. She was, in truth, a miracle of God's grace, and as to the church at Pergamum, he who hath the sharp sword with two edges, could say to her, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name; and hast not denied my faith where Satan dwelleth." In spite of obstacles and opposition, this Reformed Dutch Church was "marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before."

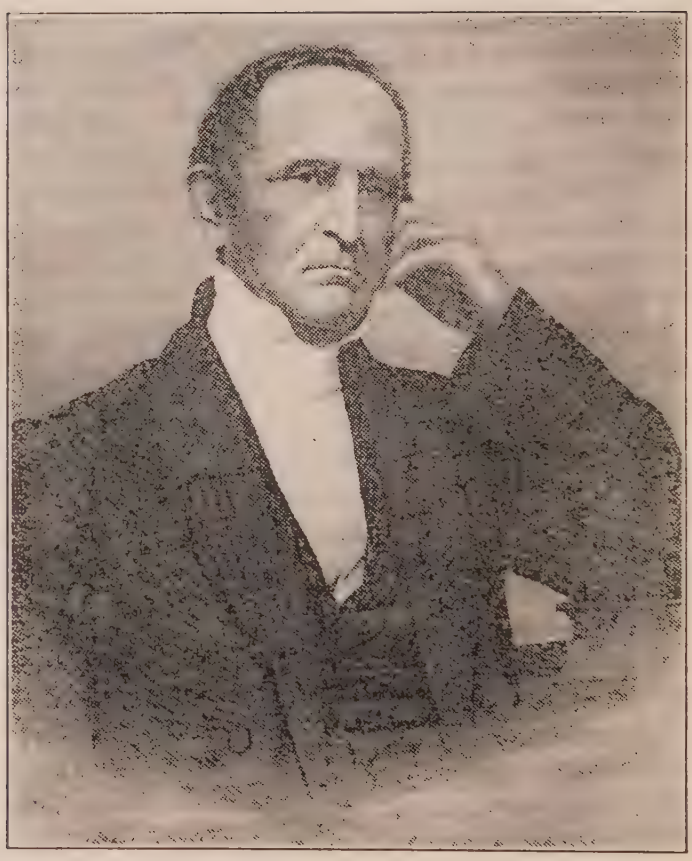
XVII. BACKSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

IT IS often claimed by western people that the Eastern Church was not well-informed, had little conception of true Calvinism, and did not know enough about her own history. That claim is so unjust, so unfounded, that the motive back of such claims may be justly suspected. This church was until 1792 part and parcel of the Church in Holland, and had all the religious literature of the Netherlands. If the old Church of the Fatherland was so well-informed, so were the leaders and the clergymen of the American branch. Almost without exception the every day language of the Eastern Reformed people, even as late as 1850, was the Dutch language, and all the leaders understood that language when Van Raalte and the Hollanders came to Michigan and Iowa in 1846-7. The clergymen and leaders, almost without exception, could read, and did read the standard theological works of Holland as late as 1850. When the English language became dominant, even the best Dutch works were translated. In 1801, Rev. Basset translated Immen's great work on Communion, under the title of "Pious Communicant"; in 1810, Rev. Van Harlingen translated Vander Kemp's Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism; in 1798, appeared the English translation of Witsius on the Covenants, as also an excellent life of Witsius. A little later the works of the elder Turretin were also translated. But, when the clergymen could read in three or four languages, the translations were not so necessary except for those not so learned. Brakel's Reasonable Religion, Voetius, Schortinghuis, Bernard de Moor, Coccejus, Maresius, Burmanus, Borstius, a Marck, Leydekker, Trigland, and all the other Dutch

standard works were read by the leaders of the Church, as is fully shown by the copious references to these classics in their own American literature. Even Dr. J. H. Livingston was educated at Utrecht, and knew the literature and theological works of the Church of Holland. In fact, it may be justly claimed that the leaders of the Eastern Church were infinitely better informed as to the characteristic features of the Calvinistic school, than were the Hollanders who came to America in 1847 and later.

In 1755, Judge Smith's History of New York appeared, the first of five or six similar histories before 1820, in all of which the history of the Holland settlers and their Reformed churches was necessarily conspicuous. Later on the Christian Magazine contained much information on the Dutch Church in the East, and, in fact, a series of articles on the subject. This was the age of pamphlets, and there were hundreds of them published by the Reformed clergymen from 1750 to 1850. In 1826 the Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church was started, and in that periodical appeared many articles on the history of the Church. Rev. Brownlee, the editor, wrote a series of articles on the Dutch Church in Holland and America. In 1829, Rev. Gunn published his excellent Life of Livingston, a work of over 500 pages—almost too expensive for those days—bristling with facts about the American Dutch Church. This work was a history of the church, and Gunn, in his preface refers to his work as a "Biography of our departed Friend, and a History of the Church." Dr. Van Raalte was in his glee when he obtained a copy of Gunn's Livingston from Dr. De Witt in 1846.

In 1830, The Christian Intelligencer superseded the Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, as the vehicle for reaching the people. This periodical was from the beginning a large and influential sheet, and was powerful even in New York City, until the Observer, Christian Union, and the like, became serious competitors; the Intelligencer was so full of historical



REV. THOMAS DE WITT, D.D.

and theological matter that it is nearly impossible to do more than just mention the fact. The history of almost every church in the denomination received attention from the editors, and Holland and Scotland were not forgotten. In fact, the period from 1800 to 1850 was prolific in matter on the history of the Church and on Reformed doctrine, and it is doubtful whether there ever was a period in the church's history when her leaders were so well informed about the history and the doctrines of their church.

In "Memorials of Dr. De Witt, p. 13, we find the statement that The Christian Intelligencer was published by Charles Van Wyck, and that a committee of Reformed ministers had been intrusted with supervision over the ecclesiastical or religious part of the same. Dr. De Witt was chairman of this committee, and "he made it his business for twelve years—1831-43, to come to the office, to read the exchanges, and to supervise the editorial work." This Dr. Thos. De Witt was a voluminous writer in the Intelligencer on historical subjects, and the larger history of New Netherlands owes much to him. Bancroft, it must be noted, published his famous chapter on New Netherlands in 1834, and gave these liberal Dutchmen of long ago their just dues. In 1841, the Particular Synod of New York requested De Witt to write the history of the Reformed Church, and the ministers of the churches were requested to assist in procuring documents and evidence for him. De Witt was also instructed to translate the valuable documents obtained by J. Romeyn Broadhead, in the archives of the Classis of Amsterdam, at Synod's expense,—that Classis having given and loaned many letters and documents dating from 1640 to 1775, to the General Synod; in 1843, De Witt was instructed to write the history of the church till the Union of 1771; evidence was gathered, though some had been lost (as is the case in the Michigan churches today). There was the greatest interest in the history of the Reformed Church at this time, and De Witt assisted others in the use of his materials,

and in 1846, one of his friends, O'Callaghan, published his History of New Netherlands. At about the same time Folsom's, Broadhead's and Murphy's works appeared, besides many histories of local churches. Volumes of the correspondence between the American Dutch Church and the Amsterdam Classis were published. The histories of some of the American Classes had been printed, so that at about 1850, the printed history of the Reformed Dutch Church was the richest in the land. Mention must be made here of Demarest's History of the Reformed Church in 1856, Corwin's Manual in 1858, and Gordon's History of R. C. A. in 1869.

In the Sage Library at New Brunswick, in the College and Seminary libraries at Holland, Michigan, and in many local libraries in Eastern cities, can be seen hundreds of volumes from the libraries of the pastors and leaders of the Church, in Latin, Dutch, and English, which show the books the fathers read and studied. Brakel, Calvin, Voetius, and all the rest of the old Dutch favorites are there; Comrie, Erskine, Newton, Witsius, Marck's Medulla are well represented, and, what is important, the life of the Erskines and the history of the Scotch Secessions seem to have been the favorites among the New York and New Jersey Church fathers. It is also evident that many Dutch works on the Heidelberg Catechism were in almost daily use by the ministers of the Church as late as 1850. The tenacity of the Dutch language was marvelous. We read of De Witt's making an oration in Dutch at the laying of the cornerstone of a church in Jersey City in 1841, and of preaching in Dutch in a church in New York City in 1844. De Witt also preached in Dutch in Van Raalte's church in 1859. Rev. Wyckoff also preached in Dutch often, and in the Intelligencer of Jan. 29, 1857, there is a notice in Dutch of a religious meeting for the Hollanders in New York City, where the venerable Rev. Marselus was to preach on "God Onze Toevlucht" (God our Refuge), in the Dutch language. In fact the whole Re-

formed Dutch Church of 1850, Scots and Huguenots included, could understand Dutch quite well, and scholars like Dr. Chambers and Prof. Demarest read Dutch easily. Dr. De Witt had in his library everything published in Holland in the first half of the nineteenth century. His copies of the minutes of the Synod of The Hague, of the "Stemmen," of Van Prinsterer's pamphlets, and all the other Dutch publications of that time are in Hope College Library. Dr. Brownlee, in the Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, in 1826, mentions the fact that the clergymen of New York had an association, whose object was to procure books and information on religious matters in Britain, Holland, France and Switzerland.

It should be stated that in the Succinct Tract, written by De Witt in 1848, by order of the Reformed Dutch Church, containing a short history of that Church, special reference is made to the standard works, besides the old standard histories in the Dutch language, used by the Eastern people on the history of Holland, as Robertson's Charles V., Schiller's Revolt of the Netherlands, and Watson's Philip II. Dr. Bethune, also, delivered all over the East his great lecture on "Holland and the Hollanders." Later on, of course, the works of Motley, Rev. Hansen, Douglas Campbell, Wm. Elliott Griffis, Van Pelt, and others have rendered the historical importance of "Brave Little Holland" still more conspicuous.

The material for good backsight was so plentiful in the Reformed Church eighty years ago, that she had and repeatedly showed excellent foresight, in avoiding the breakers of Antinomian inactivity and the rocks of Independency.

XVIII. TIDINGS FROM AFAR

THE Reformed Dutch Church, it is charged by the Seceders of Michigan and the West, deteriorated with the State Church of Holland on the one hand, and, on the other hand, had no knowledge of the secession of 1834 in the Netherlands. To reconcile these two rather contradictory claims, which presuppose at the same time, close connection with Holland, and little or no connection at all, it not an easy task. If the American Church had taken no interest in the struggle of 1815-1850, for pure doctrine in the old Mother Church, this might possibly have been some evidence of deviation from genuine Reformed doctrine by that church. But the claim of the Seceders is so unfounded as to cast suspicion on the motives of some of the claimants. Wilfull ignorance is worse than real ignorance, and the fact that the evidence proving the hollowness of their claims was always accessible, may show something worse than bona fide ignorance. The facts are completely and strongly against the Seceders, as this and the following chapter will show.

The Reformed Church in America became almost independent from the Church in Holland in 1771, and completely so in 1792. The French conquest of Holland in 1796, and the Napoleonic wars, cut off all communication with Holland. In 1800 (Minutes of General Synod, p. 281), no answer was received from Holland, "owing to the interrupted state of affairs there," and in 1820 correspondence was not yet resumed. But the terrible state of Europe, and the apparent collapse of true religion on the Continent, was a matter of such keen interest in America that, in 1813, for example, in the Albany Reformed Church,

Rev. Bradford, at the request of the Consistory, preached on the "Present Dutch Struggle for Independence." From the study of the situation in Holland it is plain that great things were expected from the deliverance from the French Age of Reason, after the battle of Leipsic. But the religious re-awakening failed to come, and already Rev. Dr. Romeyn wrote to Dr. Livingston, from Utrecht (where Livingston graduated in 1770), under date of June 12, 1814, a letter which Livingston made public. The same letter was, in 1829, published in Gunn's Livingston, p. 412. Dr. Romeyn wrote: "The character of this people, my dear Sir, has degenerated in moral and religious excellence since your residence here. The judgments of God upon the country have not produced suitable humiliation and repentance in the inhabitants. The public worship of God is not so well attended as it used to be previous to 1795. The young and rising generation are very generally Frenchified, loose in principles, and negligent of all religious duties. Great apprehensions are entertained by the pious fathers and mothers in this Israel, for the future, in consequence of this state in which the youth have fallen. Many, too many, of the younger ministers and of the students in theology, are destitute of personal religion, though not immoral. They are inclining to liberal views in religion, and approximating a scheme of doctrine hostile to the truth as it is in Jesus. The good old works of Hellenbroek, Schortinghuis, Brakel, etc., are fast going out of date. Alphonso Turretin is, to my grief, superseding Francis, his father, in the estimation of the learned. Vitringa and Venema stand high, but Witsius is rather on the wane. Theaters and stores were open on Sunday under Napoleon, and [still] are in Amsterdam and The Hague. The Sabbath is wofully profaned. The impressions of gratitude for deliverance from the French at first were very deep, and the expressions thereof very general. But the people begin to forget the Lord, and the work of His hand. Indeed, it appears to me from what I

have seen and heard, that heavier judgments are in store for these lands. I fear these judgments will be chiefly spiritual." This was written in 1814 about Holland, while just before this date the great standard Dutch theological works were made available also in translations to the American Dutch Church. Even the annotations to the Staten Bijbel were published in English by Rev. Kuypers in 1799.

In 1826, two agents were instructed to go to Holland to obtain accurate information about the church there, and to obtain books for the schools in America. In the Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church (1826-30) vol. 1, p. 54, a writer says "our church has escaped the leaven of old Holland, which I fear, has become a nest of impure doctrine. Remonstrantism is paving the way for Socinianism. They have neglected exposition of Reformed doctrine according to Hellenbroek and the Heidelberg." On the other hand, on p. 349, vol. 4, we find that the Reformed Dutch and Scottish churches are "steadfast in the faith on account of thorough instruction of the children." In fact, the four volumes of the Magazines are full of references to the contrast between religious conditions at home and in Holland. Vol. 2, p. 379, mentions the "prospect of a revival of pure religion in Holland," and on p. 283, Rev. Irving's statement that there are left in Holland only about five faithful ministers is criticized as —"we think, an exaggeration"; and on p. 186, the Java government is criticized for its irreligious attitude toward the natives. On p. 124, vol. 3, the Synod's committee to go to Holland is reported not to have acted, on account of conditions in Holland.

On his return from a trip to Europe in 1829, Rev. Dr. Stephan N. Rowan, of New York, preached a sermon which was published for the benefit of one of the Ladies Societies of the Collegiate Church, in which he refers, on p. 26, to the universities of Germany and Holland, with their "erudite feast of Neology and rationalism" as follows: "They have borrowed from the illustrious atheists of France, whatever in their

system may seem to possess the grace of intelligence, and they have applied with too fatal success the petty craft of disguising the stolen doctrine under the name and forms of Christianity!" In the same connection, referring to Holland, Dr. Rowan says, "The Reformed need Reformation! In Holland, the truth, it is believed, is generally preached; but too generally received in its form without its power! The Remonstrants against the Synod of Dort were stunned, but not destroyed; and, since the French Revolution, the once saving and steady habits of that excellent people have yielded to French principles and practices."

All of the above and much more relative to the situation in the Netherlands was published before 1830.

In 1832, Minutes, p. 133, the General Synod received a long delayed answer to its letter of 1830 to the United Associate Church of Scotland, dated Glasgow, June 5, 1832, which reads, "You mourn, dear brethren, over the declension of your Parent Church. It has, indeed, we fear, partaken of the degeneracy of the early churches of the Reformation on the continent of Europe. But symptoms of convalescence are beginning to appear in the European Protestant Churches, which like the church at Sardis, were ready to die." Here we have the Reformed Dutch Church mourning the declension of the Church in Holland, in her letter to the Scottish Secession Church, in 1830.

In 1834 Rev. David Abeel was sent to Holland to procure concert of action in the proposed missions in the Dutch East Indies, in which purpose he succeeded. (Rev. Abeel did not hear of De Cock's secession while there, because this happened after his departure). In 1836 the first missionaries of the Reformed Dutch Church left for Borneo, and so the State Church and the Dutch government consented to the Borneo Mission of the American Church at the time when they were belaboring the Seceders in their own country. In 1838, the matter of said persecution came before the General Synod upon relation of the Classis of Poughkeepsie and the Particular Synod of New York,

who had heard that "in Holland, the land of our fathers, a persecution for righteousness' sake has been carried on with the approbation, if not by the authority of the government; which appears to us not only so contrary to the light and liberal principles of the age in which we live, but to be a strange work in our fatherland, which in former ages, proved the house of refuge for all Europe." The sending of a letter of remonstrance was deferred as a matter of delicacy and difficulty, without facts or documents as a guide to official action. The fear of breaking up the Borneo Mission was the main deterrent; add to this that, no doubt, with so many of the clergymen in the State Church still loyal to the old standards, the reports were conflicting; hence the General Synod was right in being cautious under such circumstances. In 1839 the trouble with the Dutch government in Java began, whereupon a letter was sent to the King of Holland, to which, in 1840, Bleeker, the American representative at The Hague replied for the Dutch Missionary Society, to the effect that the American missionaries in Java or Borneo must be ordained in Holland or act under the Dutch Missionary Society. The General Synod refused to submit to these conditions, but, in 1841, submitted to the requirement that the missionaries spend a year at Batavia to acquire languages, etc. In 1842, Rev. Isaac Ferris was sent to Holland to have these restrictions removed, and the next year he reports the Dutch Government "assured protection, but refused to remove restrictions." The attitude of that government, the Synod said, "imparted a gloomy aspect to those missions." In 1844, a local Dutch officer is reported as hampering the Borneo Missions, and although those annoyances were reported as removed the next year, the Synod referred to those and other annoyances as occurring "under the professedly Christian government of the land of our forefathers."

Shall any one, with these facts before him, still deny that the Reformed Dutch Church, eighty years ago, did not know the attitude of the Dutch govern-

ment and the State Church on religious questions? Holland, after the long wars had a hard task, and men like Thorbecke were great statesmen, no doubt, and the advance agents of British landgrabbers had to be watched in the Indies; but the American Church soon learned that the position of Thorbecke and others with reference to the Seceders at home, and to the American Borneo Mission, was both part and parcel of the rationalistic enmity toward the "Good Old Way" of Christ.

In 1845, the old Classis of Amsterdam finally wrote, saying that the Church in Holland, almost ruined in 1795-1813, was re-organized, and held the old doctrines of grace, but that a number had acted rashly and seceded. But, in 1846, Dr. De Witt visited Holland to procure more historical material, and visited Rev. H. P. Scholte, one of the Seceders, at Utrecht. Dr. De Witt reported, in 1847, the rising tide of emigration, especially among the Seceders, and the arrival in America of the Van Raalte party in November, 1846, and of the Scholte party in May, 1847. In June, 1847, the General Synod expressed itself thus: "A new body of Pilgrims has reached our shores from Holland, the land of our fathers, and the shelter in ages gone by to outcasts by persecution. The movement will not lose on the score of moral grandeur, by comparison with any associated act of emigration in the history of our country. The Puritan and the Huguenot especially are their debtors, and ourselves will be recreant to the power of our principles, to the name we are honored to bear, and the descent we warrantably boast, if we fail to welcome them in their enterprise, and to express our love, not in words or tongue, but in deed and in truth. Providence has cast the lot of the first detachment in the immediate vicinity of our Western churches [Classis of Michigan and Illinois]; a second has arrived [Scholte's party], and thousands more are on their way—and we have now

brought within our reach an opportunity of securing the accession of a people, poor and afflicted, it is true, yet possessed of a faith precious, tried, and purified. Resolved, That we hereby express our sympathy with the emigrants from Holland, and that we commend them to the prayers, attention, kind offices, and the practical regards of our churches."

XIX. WHAT THE CHURCH KNEW ABOUT HOLLAND

THE foregoing chapter has shown us that the official position of the Reformed Dutch Church in America on the persecutions in Holland was influenced by the ties of respect for the old Holland of William the Silent and of the Synod of Dort, and by the fact that her own missionary heroes in Borneo were exposed to the displeasure and dangers anticipated from the unfriendly Dutch government and church. But the fact that the American Church fathomed the deplorable depths to which religion in Holland had fallen at that time, is made clearer by a cursory glance at the files of The Christian Intelligencer. In that paper is found a fund of information on "the declension of the Parent Church," and of the other churches of Europe, sufficient for a large volume. In the March 2, 1833, issue, Rev. Fliedner's two volumes on Holland, showing the ravages of rationalism in Holland, are reviewed, and in the March 16 issue, Fliedner's revelations are called a "shock to the structure of the Church" of Holland. Anent this the editor says, "We await with solicitude tidings from the land endeared to us by many recollections of noble daring in the cause of liberty, and yet nobler enthusiasm in the restitution of primitive faith and order." The issue of July 2, 1836, reports the secession in Holland, on account of laxity in adhesion to the Reformed Confession, as well as the full story of Rev. De Cock's suspension and deposition, and of the Evangelical Hymns question; Aug. 6, De Cock and Scholte are discussed, and also the letter of Donker Curtius, head of the

The Hague Synod, and two Dutch periodicals, Stemmen over Godsdienst, Enz., and the Geestelijk Magazijn (A Voice on Religion, etc., and the Spiritual Magazine), advocating religious reform in Holland, are quoted as exchanges of the Intelligencer; March 4, 1837, De Cock, Scholte and Brummelkamp were written up, and also Prof. Vander Palm of Leyden, while November 4 and 25 there appeared articles on De Cock, etc., and the persecutions; in July, 1837, in four issues, the Rise and Spread of Neology is discussed, as translated from "Stemmen." "Neology" means coining new ideas, and, in this connection, signifies rationalism in religion. "Stemmen over Godsdienst" drew a distinction between rationalism and neology by insisting that rationalism subjected everything to the test of human reason, while neology subjected everything to the test of human reason and the Scriptures. The articles in the Intelligencer frequently refer to Capadose, De Costa, Bilderdyk, and Van Prinsterer, and withal give a most vivid account of the defection from true doctrine. We find many expressions which show deep insight into religious affairs of Holland like the following: "Prof. Van De Palm, the Dutch Cicero, evidently has many imitators." In the issue of November 4, Hofstede De Groot and the Groningen University are written up, and De Cock's course is explained; November 25, another report on the persecutions, and Dr. Robert Baird's letter about religion in Holland to Prof. Proudfit is printed, in which many details are given, such as Scholte's preaching on boats, the troubles of his attorney Van Hall, the taking of the clothes of a poor woman who could not pay her fine, and of a man of 77 years dying in prison while confined on account of an unpaid fine; in the July 25, 1840, issue, appeared another letter by Dr. Baird, in which he says that Holland is now like England when Wesley and Whitfield began their crusade. In this letter Dr. Baird also outlines a plan for sending a commission to Holland to regulate the Borneo Missions, and proposes the sending to Holland of

a few ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church, who could speak Dutch, to preach the old gospel, especially in the colleges, as he thinks the effect would be marvelous. Dr. Baird was a great traveler, and knew the Reformed Church both in America and in Holland, and his suggestion of sending missionaries to Holland is a rather striking testimony as to the orthodoxy of the American Dutch Church. Dr. Baird was quite an eminent specialist on the questions of doctrine. In April, 1840, the Netherlands Missionary Society gets four columns in the Intelligencer; on October 2, the recent action of the Synod of The Hague relative to the Seceders is reviewed; and in a column on "Religion in Holland" we note the striking statement that, "The prevailing theology there is Arminianism under the banner of Calvinistic Standards, in many cases strongly Pelagian, and in a few borders on Socinianism and German Neology." Could the situation of that day in Holland be expressed any better today? The same article mentions Rev. V. D. Willigen's "True Nature of Christianity," a prize-book written by a clergyman of the State Church in Holland, and praised by some of the Church dignitaries, although it was decidedly heterodox. The editor says of this work, "How is the fine gold become dim! How is truth fallen in the street!" On December 3, 1842, appears Dr. Ferris' report of his visit to Holland in connection with the Borneo Mission. The Dutch government claimed so many foreigners came to the East Indies under different pretexts, that a general rule was considered necessary, for missionaries are well as for others. Dr. Ferris' report was necessarily confined to the object for which he was sent, but, before he returned, he had lectured at several places in Holland on the Reformed Dutch Church. The Seceders in Holland had the satisfaction of reading a succinct and accurate account of the American Reformed Church in their journal, De Reformatie, of which Rev. Scholte was editor. November 26, 1842, reveals Rev. Ledeboer's reply to Ferris, on behalf of the Nether-

lands Missionary Society; September 9, 1843, gives a column on Religion in Holland; May 28, 1846, in "State of Religion in Holland," appears Capadose's letter to the Free Church of Scotland; the May 14 issue, copies three columns from the Edinboro Witness on conditions in Holland, detailing also a meeting at Groen Van Prinsterer's house; October 15, appeared the Appeal to the Faithful of Van Raalte and Brummelkamp, dated Arnhem, May, 1846, translated at Albany by an immigrant, Hengeveld, who ten years before had joined Wyckoff's church; and November 26, the fight of De Cock, Scholte, Brummelkamp, etc., for reform is discussed. In 1840, one issue of The Intelligencer even described the rise of "the Churches under the Cross," in the Kampen region.

From this time on there are many articles on the Dutch immigrants, and on January 18, 1849, another meeting at Van Prinsterer's house is reported, in furtherance of reform in the State Church. After that date the articles on Holland are many, and further reference to them is hardly necessary here. But on February 25, 1856, a remarkable letter by Rev. A. W. McClure, written from Europe, on the religious phase in Holland, is published, in which it is again suggested to send as missionaries to Holland a committee of ministers, "including one or two from the Hollanders in the West," to preach and work in the Netherlands, as a means for reviving pure religion there. McClure refers to "the American Dutch Church, with its pure and educated ministry, still holding fast the integrity and purity of the faith of the Reformation as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort," so that they can "bear noble testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus."

There were many sources of information about Holland open to the Reformed Dutch Church, as the following for example: Bound in with the minutes of the Synod of the True Dutch Church for 1836 are six pages of matter on conditions in the churches of

Holland, and quotations from the Boston Recorder of June 16, 1836, the Intelligencer of May 28, the Evening Post of June 28, and the Biblical Repertory. This review also refers to "Stemmen" and to the "Geestlijke Magazijn," published in the interest of church reform in the Netherlands. It is evident, therefore, that even the Secession Church in America was informed as to the secession and persecutions in the Netherlands. As early as 1826 (Minutes, p. 12) this little Secession Church had already used the following language: "The king of Holland has arrogated to himself and exercises the power of an absolute lord, and has reduced the present degenerate and corrupt church of Holland to abject slavery." In fact, the secular press, as well as the religious journals, gave the essentials of the movements in Holland correctly, so that the Reformed Church in America, regular and seceded, had a complete record before them. The Scottish Christian Herald of those days contributed a great deal of information on the subject. One report stated that in the State Church only Clarisse and Vander Palm, among the professors, adhered to the Heidelberg Catechism.

One of the books extensively read by the ministers of the Reformed Church was Dr. Thos. Scott's History of the Synod of Dort, first edition issued in 1819, and republished in 1841, with a long introduction by Prof. Miller of Princeton Seminary. On p. 47, Prof. Miller says, "Indeed, sad to say, for a number of years past, in the kingdom of Holland, Pelagian and Unitarian sentiments have obtained such currency, that the main difficulty has been for the friends of truth to obtain permission to preach, unobstructed, the pure Gospel." This is only a casual reference to the persecutions in Holland, but the Princeton publications of that day, as of the whole Presbyterian Church in America, were actualy wrought up about conditions in Holland and western Europe.

The foregoing citations from the files of the Intel-

ligencer are not exclusive; the writer has but scratched the surface. The paper literally bristles with articles on the religious life in Holland. And what riveted the attention of the American Church especially on the secession and resulting persecution was the anomaly of the usually liberal government and people of Holland, in the nineteenth century, persecuting those who clung to the religion of the Eighty Years War and its synods, for doing the things which a few centuries before had sent thousands of their forefathers to martyrdom and the stake. The secession of 1834, and the persecution following, were not done in a corner: the secular press of Europe, Great Britain, and America sifted the matter thoroughly. The press and pulpit of the Reformed Dutch Church fairly rang with denunciations of the outrageous illiberality of the Dutch government and Church. This American Church, claiming rightfully historical and apostolic succession from the great Reformed Church of Holland, after a lapse of about forty years, with communication with Holland cut off by the Napoleonic wars and the Age of Reason, and having acquired her independence from the Classis of Amsterdam before the sluice gates of infidelity were opened over Holland, was moved as never before, when she found the Mother Church almost in ruins, and the government even hostile to her own Dyak Mission schools in Borneo. And what intensified the feeling was the fight for life the American Dutch Church herself had on her hands for years against Unitarians and Catholics, a fact which accounts for the pointed arguments in her newspaper, synodical acts, and published sermons against Romanism and Rationalism in her midst and in Holland. She had a first hand acquaintance with the enemies of Reformed truth, and was therefore logically ready to sympathize with the fighting saints of the De Cock-Scholte-Van Raalte band of reformers. A little study of her literature, revealing, as it does, the long battle with the cohorts of liberalism and the encroachments of Romanism, at home, reveals also fully that the Re-

formed Dutch Church in America of that time had a fuller and correcter knowledge of the situation in Holland than we have it today from Verhagen's and other histories.

It is true, the editorial tone of the Intelligencer was hopeful that the secession would sweep Holland back to her moorings, but the The Hague Synod was always under suspicion. On January 16, 1851, speaking of the first newspaper—De Hollander—published in Holland, Michigan, and of the pilgrims from the Netherlands, the editor of the Intelligencer voices the sentiment of the Eastern Reformed Church, for twenty years past, in these words: "But it cannot be denied, that at present, in Holland, a lamentable dereliction from the principles and practice of vital godliness has taken place. Many places where once the Divine Redeemer was worshipped in spirit and in truth are now laid waste and burnt up by the fires of infidelity and Socinianism. The universities where once our Frelinghuysens, Hardenberghs and Livingstons were educated for the ministry have become corrupted with error and false doctrine. That orthodoxy and exemplary Christian deportment, which distinguished our Holland progenitors, has given way to the most dangerous and soul destroying errors, and a formality in practice, no less alarming in its consequences, has succeeded."

We have now seen what the General Synod knew about the degeneracy of religion in Holland, and also what The Intelligencer told the people about it. Of course, all the rank and file did not remember all this information, but the leaders, the watchmen on the walls, knew all about it, and that is the important fact, after all. The rank and file of the Western Dutch churches know little or nothing about the history of their own churches, but the leaders know the salient features, and from this we must judge a church. By this standard the information the Eastern Church had

about the secession in Holland was complete, and hence the criticism of the Western Seceders, on this score, is without foundation.

A writer defending the secession in Michigan in 1857 and later, Prof. Hemkes of Grand Rapids, said on p. 256 of his *Rechtsbestaan,* "The Reformed Church here is a plant of the Netherlands Reformed Church of 1719 [1619?], and as a church did not know the seceders church in Holland at all, and did not know the history of Revs. De Cock, Van Velzen and Brummelkamp. See article of Rev. C. Vorst in De Wachter of April, 1893. Our church [the seceded] is a plant of the Seceded Reformed Church in Holland after 1834." Whether it is possible to crowd more errors into one paragraph than Hemkes did, is a question, for we have seen that the Reformed Dutch Church, *as a church,* as shown by her Synod, her newspapers, books and pamphlets, did know the essence of the secession of 1834, and did actually know the story of De Cock, Scholte and other Seceders. The testimony of Rev. Vorst quoted by Rev. Hemkes is absolutely worthless on this subject. Rev. Vorst's record will appear later on, and let it be said in advance that it is such as to preclude forever the possibility of giving any weight to his statements wherever they touch the Eastern and Western Reformed churches. The seceded church in the West is not a slip of the secession of 1834 any more than the western branch of the Reformed Church is, but it is a plant of certain unimportant factions of that secession, just as Van Raalte and Vander Meulen represented other and more reasonable factions.

Another Christian Reformed writer also loses sight of all the information hereinbefore referred to. Rev. Beets in his *Zestig Jaren,* p. 70, labors to cast a fog over this matter, and speaking of Van Raalte joining the Eastern Church, insists on the lack of information, and says "there was in those days not a single work on the history of the old (Am.) Dutch Church worthy of mention." Such a statement, while easily made in order to build a legend, is a bald exaggeration. The

history of the American Reformed Church, until about 1750, is the history of the old Church of Holland, and of the subsequent history there were many pamphlets in circulation, while the whole matter received thorough treatment in Gunn's Livingston, which was designed as a history of the church till about 1825; after which date, besides the printed Synod minutes since 1784, the different digests published gave an adequate history of the church, not to mention Baird's, Brownlee's, O'Callaghan's, and several other works of an earlier date, which gave the history of the Dutch Church of the East rather thorough consideration. In the West this legend of an ignorant, indifferent Reformed Church is growing; and the secession writers copy one another faithfully, without investigating the facts, thus making the "society of the saints" in New York and New Jersey of those days "suspected," as the Fathers of Dort phrased it. In the West such blind historians lead the blind further astray; and it is not a miracle that truth staggers in the streets of the western Dutch villages, wounded by the hands of those who should have been her guardians.

The historical matter about the Reformed Church in the East presented in the foregoing chapters, well known to the fathers of seventy years ago, is in the West almost a sealed book. These things are not, but ought to be known; for the work of secession of sixty years ago finds great support in a purely imaginary state of affairs on the Raritan and the Hudson.

It is easy, for a time, to represent facts as one wishes them to be, but it is not so easy to present facts as they really were. The latter requires research, common honesty, and some regard to the sacredness of truth. The writer who guesses is liable to miss the mark, and lacks the first instincts of a historian, as was the case with the Seceder writers last cited, on the points in question.

Did Prof. Hemkes and his copiers not know that the truth of history would wreak vengeance inexorable

as fate on their attempts to defend their arbitrary and extreme position by suppressing and warping historical facts? Did they not see that sooner or later their slip-shod and criminally careless treatment of the history of the Reformed Church, East and West, and the forging of evidence against those churches, would recoil on them, and that as writers, or rather *mis*-writers, of history they would in due time be found out and nailed to the cross of historical facts?

XX. SONS OF THUNDER

WELL acquainted with the history of the Church in Holland and in America, as the fathers of seventy years ago were, a glance in the libraries of the church reveals a wealth of publications by her own leaders. Corwin's Manual gives the names of hundreds of books by Reformed clergymen on all subjects of pressing importance. The Reformed Church is generally spoken of in those days by outsiders as "distinguished for her learned ministry," and, judged by her publications, the statement is not overdrawn. It is impossible to mention all the great men in the church of that time. But it is worthy of note that the greatest preachers in the church were distinctively loyal to the good old doctrines. Dr. Geo. W. Bethune, for example, the Beecher of his time, left two volumes on the Heidelberg Catechism (printed in 1869); and Dr. Berg wrote on the Catechism, and many other did likewise. There was an immense mass of literature on catechetical subjects current among the people. The strong works of Brownlee, Berg, and Gordon on Romanism deserve attention today. The vast majority of the church's publications, however, were strongly and directly on the questions of Calvinism and Arminianism, and the "distinguishing features of the Protestant Reformation."

Out of the wilderness of books and pamphlets of the Church, we can select only a few of the smaller ones out of the enormous mass published since 1800. All bear unmistakable evidence of the conflict with Unitarianism and the like, waged by the Reformed Church in those days.

At the organization of the Classis of Long Island, June 1, 1814, Rev. Peter Lowe delivered a sermon in the Flatbush church, which was printed and scattered far and wide. Note the following quotation from this sermon: "Let the faithful servant of Christ hold that fast which he has received from the evidence of eternal truth, 'that no man take his crown,' Rev. 3:11, and the rather, as the hydra of Arianism has in our day regained its ancient venom, and leagued with the Socinian blashemy, stalks abroad undaunted, and sheds its baleful influence on many parts of our country. Say, my brethren, is not that contempt which is so liberally poured on God's anointed son, our blessed Lord, one of the fruitful causes of his present controversy with us?

'When thousands drink the Arian lie,
Or, poisoned by Socinus, die'."

In 1830, Rev. Nich. I. Marselus of the Greenwich Reformed Church, published "The Good Old Way," a discourse in behalf of the Sabbath School Union of the Reformed Church, based on Jer. 6:16, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." It was a clarion call to the church to study Catechism, Creeds and Confessions in the Sundays Schools, as a safeguard against infidelity, error, and delusion. "The good old way" of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles was by the path of "original sin, total depravity, imputation of Christ's righteousness," as opposed to the "damnable heresies which deny the divinity of Christ and disbelieve the Scriptures." "Hold fast even the form of sound words, lest we wander from the good way, the old paths, by which the apostles and primitive Christians have entered into their rest above."

Dr. Isaac Ferris, the chancellor of the University of the City of New York, was also among the prominent writers of the Church. He left the Presbyterian Church in 1816, because his pastor was a victim of

Hopkinsianism, so-called. Ferris attended the Associate Reformed Seminary at Newburgh, N. Y., for two years, but completed his course at New Brunswick. In his "Fifty Years' Ministry in R. C. A.—a Memorial Discourse," on p. 16, he says, "Mine had been a careful maternal training in the Assembly's Catechism, and my associations were with those who rigidly held the old-fashioned orthodoxy, and my preferences led me to the Dutch Church as maintaining those in their purity. And there I found an order and a form of service, and altogether an ecclesiastical economy particularly grateful to my feelings. This day [Feb. 26, 1871], more than ever it is the Church of my choice." In 1848, Dr. Ferris (who had made a trip to Holland in 1842), published his "Ecclesiastical Characteristics of the Reformed Church," which furnishes a clear explanation of the Reformed Dutch Church in all her relations. On p. 14, he refers to the Seceders of Holland as "now flying to this country," and says of Holland, "Semi-arianism pours over the land from the fountain of theology at Groningen, and the true sons of the Reformation groan over a calamity similar to that which tried the hearts of the Puritans in the organization of Unitarianism."

Dr. Ferris says he used the Hellenbroek and Heidelberg catechisms, and visited his people annually, during his pastorates at New Brunswick, Albany and New York. He was very instrumental, in 1857, in placing all the foreign missions of the Church under her own Board. He calls the college and seminary at New Brunswick "the hope of the fathers," and the "fountains of sound knowledge and sound theology." Of the Seminary he says that it was the first of its kind in the land, with an endowment [in 1848] of $70,000. "I do not know its parallel." Referring to the conservative character of the Reformed Dutch Church amidst the agitation and extremes of her neighbors in a flood of innovations, he states that "she was not easily excited, fell into no extremes, and while she does not run as fast as some, her progress is

healthful and sound." Dr. Ferris' "Characteristcs" reflects the inner life of the church completely, her bright and dark sides, and describes briefly the rise of the Sunday school and the partial eclipse of regular catechetical instruction as a result.

"Characteristics" was one of the works sent to Dr. Van Raalte in 1848, and the latter was pleased with what Dr. Ferris said about the greater caution observed in receiving church members.

Of all the literary products of the Reformed Dutch Church, nothing gives us such a correct impression of conditions in the Atlantic States, as Rev. James Romeyn's *Crisis, and its Claims upon the Church of God*—a sermon delivered before the General Synod in 1842. It is a thunderblast of 55 pages, replete with criticism of the Christian Church in the East, and of the Reformed Church incidentally. He gives the latitude and longitude of Churches, in such scathing, scalding, thought-strokes, that the little book has become, in a sense, a classis. He scores the press and the politicians; he says, "the infrequency of discipline bespeaks the disinclination and difficulty of exercising it"; conversation is on outward forms, not on experimental religion, the hidden man of the heart, union with Christ, Spirit influence, spiritual conflict, and the reconciliation of dark providences with covenant relations and privileges; there is a falling off of personal piety, and an increase of sectarianism; "there is a sword whose edge and point are penetrating the vitals of this land, whose handle is at Rome"; Protestants have been unfaithful to their trust, and degenerate sons of the martyrs are suffering the cause to go by default, while popery, with giant strides, and consummate skill is laying hold of the keys of the country, touches the springs of influence, of legislation, and shouts from outposts captured near the citadel"; the Calvinistic Churches cannot plead antiquity, nor the Fathers, and have no uncommanded ceremonies and liturgical chimes; we have one master, the Bible, which alone is the religion of Protestantism; we are thrown

on our own resources, the intrinsic worth of our cause; our Church holds a midway station between dead forms and mystical abstractions,—with spirituality the essence, and forms enough to give expression; some praise God by the proxies of a few select singers; without Christ crucified, we go to battle without the ark; the doctrine of election is the stay of ministerial labor, because it is bestowed in a case where the result is absolutely sure; "the stern unyielding attitude of the Reformed Church subjects us to reproach for narrowness"; "our brethren abroad [missionaries in Borneo] are denied rest for the soles of their feet, and the unworthy jealousy of the land of our fathers [Holland], has proved one of the most formidable hindrances"; "persecution [during the Eighty Years War] drenched Holland in slaughter, and made the Reformed Church in Holland a martyr church, and has given occasion for the appeal of the souls under the altar for the avenging of their blood"; an academy must be established in the Mississippi valley, and "this attempt would be worthy of a church whose principles on the subject of a competent ministry, whose love of truth and order and steadfastness and pecuniary liberality have rendered her a praise"; the great pilot and ruler of storms is on board, however, and let us not be afraid to advance or do right for fear of doing wrong; do not stereotype the Church of God; the doctrines of religion naturally support and suppose each other, like stones in an arch; if there is no depravity, what place is there for regeneration; if no regeneration, what cure is there for depravity; if there is no inability, Christ cannot be strength to any one.

The above excerpts are here quoted out of their connection, but in that sermon Romeyn discussed the cardinal doctrines of the Church, and heresies, thoroughly and logically, and his "Crisis" is therefore probably the best known of the productions of the Eastern Church. The thrilling, piercing voice of Romeyn was never forgotten by those who heard him.

He concluded as follows: "And now, O Lord! our eyes are unto Thee. We wait for Thee as for the rain. Send now prosperity. Wilt thou not revive us again? Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon this garden, that the spices thereof may flow abroad."

Rev. Romeyn was the best informed man in the Reformed Church on conditions in Holland, and in 1838, and as instanced above, he never minced matters when he talked on the religious decline and the persecutions in Holland.

The above works have been mentioned merely by way of example, for the list could be expanded indefinitely. It is clear from those cited and the many not cited, that the whole religious atmosphere in the Reformed Dutch Church was essentially sound and strictly Reformed. One of the signs of that time, cropping out in those publications very often, in addition to the fierce fight against all forms of heresy, was the rapid growth of the Sunday School. These schools gradually broke down the weekly catechetical classes, so that it was necessary to use the Heidelberg or Hellenbroek in the Sunday Schools. The General Synod hammered on this subject year after year, and Rev. Marselus' "Good Old Way," we have seen, was a special plea for such instruction in the Sunday School. While the Heidelberg Catechism was one of the Forms of Concord of all the Reformed Churches, and is, no doubt, strictly Reformed in doctrine, the use of this Cathechism, was prescribed in the Rules of Church Government only. Such Rules, the Synod of Dort said, "may" and "ought" to be "changed," etc., if the interest of the churches require it. In 1833, the General Synod changed the period during which the preaching from the Catechism should be completed, from one to four years, in harmony with the Dort proviso, that the "interest of the churches" really demanded the change. Naturally, the General Synod, as the actual successor of the Synod of Dort and other preceding synods, was the body authorized to legislate on this subject, and

legislate it did. A man-made Catechism, prescribed for us by man-made church rules, however excellent that Catechism was, cannot be given the same weight as is given the Scriptures, and the direct use of, and appeal to, the Scriptures made in the Sunday Schools can be easily defended as against the indirect authority of the Catechism. It may be that the Sunday School work is not specific enough as to doctrines, and for that reason such schools were by many considered a dangerous innovation; but time has proved them of incalculable value in the advancement of Christianity. The claim that the neglect of the Catechism undermined the doctrine of election is manifestly absurd, as the Heidelberg does not mention election, and does not even hint at preterition. The doctrine of election is merely assumed, as two expressions in answers to questions 52 and 54, show,—*chosen ones*, and *church chosen*. Furthermore, the doctrine of predestination is found in the scriptures, and this truth, like all other Bible truths, is not dependent upon the Heidelberg or any other catechism. Many think that the Sunday Schools are a great deal better vehicle for instruction in Bible truths than was the old catechetical method. However, this matter does not show any laxity in the Eastern Church, but is simply one of those things which illustrates the changing phases in Church life, which the changes in Church rules can regulate. It is evident that today the Heidelberger is regaining its place as a text-book in religious instruction in the Reformed Churches in America.

Many questions loom large in the publications of the Reformed Church. Suffice it to say, however, that these publications show a tremendous endeavor to maintain the Good Old Way, even amid the shifting scenes of the New York and New Jersey of seventy years ago.

XXI. THE REFORMED CHURCH A ROCK

OF COURSE, the dark spots in the history of the Eastern Reformed Church are fully in evidence in her literature. The problem of her Schools at New Brunswick, for example, is referred to in the Synod of 1848, p. 299, as follows: "We are one of seven similar institutions within a district of one hundred miles in length, and with the exception of Easton (fifty miles west) not more than ten miles broad. Our position is wellnigh central." This tells the story of competition with Williams, Amherst and Union and other colleges, and with Princeton only sixteen miles away. Union was almost a Reformed Dutch institution, and though it furnished New Brunswick Seminary almost as many students at Rutgers did, it was a serious competitor of the latter college.

With the sterner features of Calvinism among her doctrines, with Witsius, Marck, Voetius, Calvin and Augustine in her libraries, in two, and sometimes in three languages, her schools adhering to the Standards of Dort, and in the midst of the weakening of religious ties and the lapse of discipline in the different denominations, this Reformed Church maintained her discipline almost up to the standards of 1619. And it is a fact, that seventy years ago, this Church amidst the blustering of the Age of Reason, was literally bombarded with accusations of "narrowness," "bigotry" and "conservatism," so often complained of by James Romeyn, and Drs. Ferris, Berg and Brownlee. Even the Presbyterians thought they discovered something grim and gloomy in the Reformed Church, while they forgot that their own Westminster standards were a refinement even on the stern Canons of Dort.

Many others were guilty of criticizing a church which, ever since Livingston's powerful missionary sermon of 1804, on the "Everlasting Gospel to Them that Dwell on the Earth," Rev. 16:6, which stirred the church and all New England with her, had faced toward missionary labors, and had deliberately refused to give *carte blanche* to the Labadistic poison of Solomon Fraeligh, whose remedy was a thousandfold worse than Conrad Ten Eyck's disease; a church which had gladly assumed her part of the burden of bringing into the fold the "other sheep" which Christ had; a church from whose Seminary went forth a missionary fervor that sent so many heralds of the cross to the Orient, in answer to the cries of millions perishing of hunger for the glad tidings of great joy; a church which held the doctrine of election as one of the corollaries of the absolute sovereignty of God, and vindicated this doctrine in her Synod and books, but did not magnify it out of all proportions; a church that believed God commanded men to believe, that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God—the use of the means of grace, in the first instance, while God will draw, convince, and also give assurance of election, in due time; that believed that the good tidings must be presented to the world, without a maze of speculation on the question of predestination, which is after all the form in which a God, to whom all time is an everlasting and eternal present, views in His infinitude, the question of salvation. The Reformed Church always, in 1850, in 1820, and in the Synod of Dort, knew that, when Paul spoke of election, he was talking from the viewpoint of the Almighty, and he did so because he was inspired, and could in a measure speak God's thoughts; knew also that Paul, at the same time, said the doctrine was incomprehensible to the finite human mind, and that, therefore, the command to believe and study the Scriptures, and the like, must be attended to, humanly speaking, before the thankfulness, humility and desire for holiness, which are evidences of election, will ap-

pear. It is remarkable that when we speak to God and try to think God's thoughts, we approach His veiwpoint, and are all Calvinists—that is, we realize that God is all in all; but that when we come to apply God's viewpoint to sinful humanity, we begin with the command to believe and search, and are all more or less Methodists. And it is just this combination of solid doctrine with earnest missionary activity which reveals the very soul of the Synod of Dort, and the life of the Reformed Church.

After considering the works of the professors of the Seminary at New Brunswick, McClelland's *"Interpretation of Scripture,* Cannon's *Pastoral Theology,* and Van Vranken's *Socinianism Subversive of Christianity,* together with the contemporary literature of the church of that day, we can understand something of the criticism of those who differed from her. Prof. Schaff, of the German Reformed Church, the western neighbor of the Reformed Dutch Church, said the latter was entirely too firm and rigid in her theology. While lecturing in Europe, in 1854, Prof. Schaff said that the Reformed Dutch Church was holding fast to the Heidelberg Catechism and the articles of doctrine of the Synod of Dort; that she was almost more strongly Calvinistic than the Old School Presbyterians; that she was probably the strictest and most immovable of all the Reformation churches in America, and felt at ease on the cushion of established orthodoxy, with the complacent idea that the Synod of Dort had solved all problems, and left nothing for succeeding generations to work out. See Dosker's *Ger. Kerk,* p. 16 and p 168.

Even as early as 1848, (See Intelligencer of Feb. 17), Dr. Schaff speaks of the Reformed Dutch brethren rather more strongly. He says, "They take their rest contentedly on the Articles of Dort, and will allow no theological movement within their walls, and, least of all, any that comes from Germans. They are rich, and possess to the full. A departure from self-con-

tented orthodoxy, which has long furnished one of the most difficult problems of theology, and which has no idea at all of progressive development, is [with them], *eo ipso,* heresy. To learn anything from the Germans —to respect their peculiarities—of this they do not even dream."

Prof. Schaff was at the time involved in the spread of the Mercerberg theology, so strenuously opposed by the Reformed Church, and evidently was not at ease on account of the rigorous orthodoxy of Reformed Dutch brethren, who were "probably the strictest and most immovable of the Reformation churches in America." It should be noted that Prof. McClelland of New Brunswick Seminary scored the Germans heavily in his *Interpretation of Scriptures.*

But Dr. Robert Baird, of glorious memory and good works, knew this most '.immovable body" just as well as did the great Philip Schaff. Baird said, "The doctrines of the Reformed Church are in all respects purely Calvinistic, and, from the first, this church has been favored with an able, learned and godly ministry." See *Religion in America,* p. 508.

Dr. Robert Baird, a graduate of Princeton in 1822, was till 1827 the energetic agent of the New Jersey Bible Society, which in an incredibly short time put a Bible in every home in New Jersey, and was connected with the New Jersey Missionary Society, 1827-35; in 1835-9, and again in 1839 and later, he was in charge of the work of the Foreign Evangelization Society with headquarters at Paris. Dr. Baird was not an unfamiliar figure on the Streets of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, where there were branches of the Society. By his associations with the Reformed Dutch Church in the East, and by his visits in Holland, he knew conditions in the Reformed Churches in America and Holland better than any other man, and, as was said, by his letters direct from Europe, he stirred up the fathers of the Eastern Reformed Church, from time to time about the deplorable situation in old Holland. Dr.

Baird's information about both churches was based on personal observation on the grounds.

The testimony of Dr. Ferris and Prof. McClelland, who came to the Reformed from the Associate Reformed Church, of Dr. Berg, who come from the German Reformed Church, and of eminent scholars like Drs. Schaff and Baird of the German and Presbyterian Churches, as to the character of the Reformed Dutch Church is important; but the best evidence is found in the attitude of Rev. Van Raalte, for years professor of theology at Arnhem, and of Rev. Van der Meulen, both leaders of the Holland emigrants of 1846-7. Both had borne the brunt of secession in Holland, and had already, in 1840, cut loose from the fanaticism and ignorant phariseeism of some of their fellow seceders, while both had, from the day of their arrival in America, read the Intelligencer and studied the church literature furnished them while at New York and Albany, and later. Rev. Van Raalte, who attended most of the sessions of the General Synod since joining the Reformed Church in 1850, and who had repeatedly visited in the East, and had seen the church in action, and had studied her in her literature, said among other things, in the Classis of Holland (Michigan) in 1856, that he had heard in the General Synod an able discussion and defense of Reformed polity, the equal of which he had never heard in his life. Rev. Van der Meulen, after eight years of study of the Eastern Church, and after he, in 1855, with his elder, Van de Luyster, had attended the General Synod at New Brunswick, surprised his people on the Sunday after his return home, by explaining once more the Reformed Dutch Church, her schools, boards, officers, etc., in a sermon on Psalm 48:12, 13, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; number the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following."

Van Raalte and Van der Meulen knew what Reformed doctrine, worship, and discipline were, but they also understood the rights and liberties of indi-

vidual members, and were firm believers in Christian unity on the only possible basis, viz.: of unity in essentials, and liberty in non-essentials. They joined the Eastern Church in 1850, not as one organization joining another, but as giving formal expression to a unity that existed in 1847, even in 1834, but which only waited for a formal expression, after due investigation.

One of the strongest testimonials as to the character of the Reformed Dutch Church is that furnished at Orange, New Jersey, on April 18, 1875. After trouble about secular trusteeship in the Presbyterian Church, and other questions connected with predestination, a meeting was held in Lyric Hall, and a church was organized on the Reformed basis—"The doctrines of grace called Calvinistic pure and simple, and Church government in the hands of Christ's own officers—the minister, the elders and the deacons of the church." About 120 members of the Second Presbyterian Church joined Rev. Geo. S. Bishop and others, in forming what was afterwards known as the First Reformed Church of Orange, N. J. Their platform was: "We believe, right out of God's Word, in Total Depravity,—in the Guilt, Pollution, and absolute Helplessness of our nature. 2. We believe that God hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and that a man's salvation depends, not first of all on his choice, but back of that on the antecedent choice of God: 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' 3. We believe that Jesus died not as the Redeemer of all men, but of His people, and that His people will be proved to be the souls who trust in Him. 4. We believe in a real inward divine change in a man, called regeneration, new birth, that a man may have many calls under the Gospel, but only one effectual calling. 5. We believe that men thus called, thus born again, have in them something that can never perish and can never die.—that no man falls from grace, but from lack of it. 6. The church is not a democracy, not a republic, not an organization at all of man's manufacture, but a Christ-

ocracy, a kingdom and a government dictated and controlled by Christ. That 'God,' as Paul said, 'hath in the church set governments,' consisting of ministers, elders, and deacons—not secular trustees and the like."

Dr. Bishop and his people deliberately chose the Reformed Church, as the Church which "carries the balance-rod between undue extremes in the Church," and as being nearest to the Scriptures in her doctrines, service and government. And, upon application, they were received by the Classis of Newark as a part of the Reformed Dutch Church. Dr. Bishop made the pulpit of the Orange Reformed Church for years ring with the greatest messages of predestination, election, free grace, and the like; and his printed sermons were read all over the land, and were the means of once more reviving and popularizing considerably those and the other essentials of Calvinism in America. Dr. Bishop came from the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and finally found his home, and his workshop, and a grand welcome, in the Reformed Church in America. He called the Reformed Church "A Rock."

XXII. A BEACON LIGHT IN THE NIGHT OF ERROR

THE result of the writer's research as to whether the Eastern Church was truly a New Testament church, part of the evidence of which has been given in preceding chapters, proved a great surprise to him, groping, as he had been for years in the midst of the foggy religious and historical atmosphere, which has for sixty years obscured the truth of history and dampened religious activity among the western Hollanders and their descendants. The evidence, indeed, shows that the Eastern brethren understood Calvinism far better than the bulk of the immigrants of 1847. The functions and limits of Church Orders or rules were also better understood in the East, while many of the western people could not discern between Forms of Concord and Church Rules. In the sense of Dort the eastern brethren remembered that Paul speaks of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," and that with the change from Dutch to English, they might, and ought to, change the rules so as to allow hymns and spiritual songs also, when the interests of the church demanded it; they also bent the rules when the Sunday schools interfered with catechetical instruction, and the interest of the church seemed to require the encouragement of such schools; and they also knew that preaching from the catechism was required by a man-made rule only, which might well give place to direct instruction through the Bible. They had a General Synod, in which the local churches gathered each

year, or as often as necessary, to legislate on such matters as the Synod of Dort and preceding national synods had done.

The matters of discipline and catechism will be discussed later in connection with the secession of 1857. Only let it be said that the record thus far of the Reformed Dutch Church shows her sound at heart and at root—a real representative and continuation of the Reformed Church of two centuries ago, which started on her independent career just before the waves of heresy and error overwhelmed the old mother church, and was thus preserved by God to be a safe refuge for the Pilgrim Fathers of 1847. These "Pilgrim Fathers of the West" were not all qualified to judge the American church, for some of them came over with the extreme egotism of a professional secession spirit, with views so beclouded with ignorance of the government of Christ's church on earth, that they continued on American soil, and without just cause, the work of secession, learnt in Holland, and also without proper investigation, took their cue partly from the warped and ill-considered assertions of Fraeligh of 1822, instead of investigating the record of the Reformed Dutch Church to date.

The writer holds no brief for the Reformed Church East or West, but his unbiased investigation has shown, that, from 1771 onward, there were watchmen on the walls of the Dutch-Scotch-Huguenot Reformed Zion, who spoke against seeking denominational honors in the Borneo Mission, in numbers or in wealth, and who hammered home, as in 1848, the truth that they "needed a new baptism from above, and that they should so present the doctrine of personal, effectual grace, that our churches shall not deem it a mere dogma, but regard it as a living principle, which brings them under its mastery, so that they lay their hearts and all their treasure at the feet of Jesus." Many are the notes of disappointment, and the voices

of sorrow for the declension of personal piety; but the language of the contrite heart and spoken spirit is blended all through the Reformed literature of that time—a sign of real spiritual life. Withal, these Reformed Churches magnified the sovereignty and the grace of God, and lifted high the banner of Christ, the Redeemer, with a charity for Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists, so thoroughly scriptural and Calvinistic, that it is to them, and ever will be, a badge of honor.

Although only a little of the evidence has been presented, the writer found that the Reformed Dutch Church was historically, and by virtue of her doctrine and life, the successor and continuation of the Church of Dort not only, but was, in fact, the church of the Netherlands, seemingly providentially saved from ruin. And therefore Van Raalte, Van der Meulen, and Ypma were so glad that they could live, even in America, in the identical venerable Church of the Martyrs, which still felt herself absolutely dependent on God, as she sings in one of her hymns—

Stand up,—stand up for Jesus,
Stand in his strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own;
Put on the gospel armor,
And, watching unto prayer,
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.

The reformed Church was not wanting where duty and danger called, as the roll of her missionary martyrs shows. In 1819, she sent Dr. John Scudder to India, and adopted Heber's hymn as her missionary battlecry:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft over Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile;
Salvation, O Salvation!
The joyful song prolong,
Till earth's remotest nation,
Has learned Messiah's name.

When the writer overcame on his part the general ignorance among the western Hollanders as to the history of the Eastern Church, and when he had studied her from her own records, he found that this church had put up a hard fight against the forces of liberalism, and that, while the enemies got around her, and over her, they never got a real foothold in her; he found her conservatism and rigidity criticized, but her activities praised by all except Papists and Seceders; he found her what Calvin called "a tolerable church," from which no one could secede without breaking the conjugal bonds Christ established, the breaking of which, *Calvin calls rebellion.* The writer also found that what appeared at first view like occasional bouquets thrown at its Reformed Dutch Zion by the General Synod, were in fact literal truths, when seen in the light of her struggle for the doctrines of 1618-9, her almost unparalleled sacrifices for the lost sinners of her own land and of the heathen world, and of the cruel stripes and wounds inflicted by her rationalistic and heretical enemies,—as when the General Synod said in 1854, "It is no unwarranted egotism, therefore in us, to say that we honor, respect and love that church, which for centuries has stood forth amid the night of error and delusion, as a beacon light to point the inquiring to the way of life, and which like Gibraltar itself, in the midst of dissessions and defec-

tions which have painfully tried other churches, has always remained true to her Calvinistic history, and unshaken in her support of the distinctive features of the Protestant Reformation;"—and as in 1849, "A goodly heritage, a church of the Reformation, as near, we verily believe, as any other church of that glorious era, to the infallible oracles of God, transmitted to us through the piety, the faithfulness, the very martyrdom of our fathers. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces'."

XXIII. A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CHURCH IN 1850

THE greatest menaces to the Reformed Church in the '20's and later were, according to the records of those times, the growth of Romanism and the settling of all kinds of foreigners in and around New York. In this fight "the politicians catered to the Catholic vote, while the public was asleep." The same battle was on in Massachusetts, and the Romanists finally succeeded in banishing the Bible out of the public schools, and then, it is is said, raised a hue and cry against the "godless public schools." Drs. Brownlee, Berg and Gordon wrote books against Romanism, which went through several editions. This was about the time of the famous "Kirwan Letters," replied to by Archbishop Hughes. The fight in New York City was reported as severe, and Brownlee's life was even in danger. He gave battle, believing that religion, liberty, and safety of the Republic were involved. Dr. Berg left the German Reformed Church, on account of the Romanizing Mercerberg theology, and continued the battle when he joined the Dutch Church. The whole demonination was stirred, and if ever a church of the Reformation was true to her principles, it was the Reformed Church, under the lead of Brownlee, Berg, Gordon, and a host of others. And when she saw religious or Bible instruction banished from the common schools, she took up at once the matter of parochial schools. Mr. Schiffelen of New York gave $7,000 for such schools, and the Synod minutes and the Intelligencer, 1850-70, contain many references to the subject. A fund was established, and such schools, even at Kalamazoo and Holland City, for several years,

received assistance from this source. The question, narrowed to the issue between the public school and Catholicism, was finally dropped, although the General Synod said, as late as 1864, that "parochial schools have shown their value to the churches." Even in this particular, as against the aggressions of the Roman church, the blood of the Beggars of the Sea ran "true to form."

So far, nothing has developed to show that the Reformed Dutch Church was a false church, a Babel of Confusion, with which the Lord had a controversy, as the Seceders of 1822 claimed. But, as the year 1850 has been taken as a convenient resting place, it may be interesting to refer to a photograph of the Reformed Dutch Church at that time, taken by a distinguished foreigner, Prof. Buddingh of Utrecht, during the summer of 1850, while visiting New York and New Jersey. After his return, Prof. Buddingh published three books in the Dutch language, and one of them was on the Reformed Dutch Church in America. On p. XI of his introduction, he says, "It was a pleasure to find the old Dutch ancestral customs maintained here. The first lesson of the day, in the family, and in the higher and lower schools, both for boys and girls, was always from the Scriptures. No school opens without prayer and Bible-reading. The right of the free and unhindered use of the Bible, secured by the Reformation and the Eighty Years War, was transplanted with the Reformed Church to New Netherlands, and the custom of Bible-reading may be said to flourish on the banks of the Hudson. The conviction of the necessity of religious instruction in the schools is, also in America, so deeply rooted, that we find in gilt letters on the school walls, next to the Ten Commandments, expressions in favor of it." Buddingh also speaks of Harvard, as, like Groningen, the "cancer of true Christianity." On p. 131, he says, "The Bible is the law-book of life here, and wherever I was a guest, a selection from it, with prayer and thanksgiving, was the first and last lesson of the day." He also

remarks, "The Reformation was the result of Bible-reading; the church is the daughter of the Reformation, and the school is a sister." On p. IV of the introduction he says, "This Church maintains the Standards of Dort purely, and is a blessing to the Community." He says, on p. 132, that he did not hear a sermon on the catechism, during his visit, but that "discipline and morals are strictly enforced and watched. Is this so in Holland?" Buddingh touches the question of hymns, and says that when a hymn-book was ordered by the General Synod in 1848, it was decided also to reprint the psalm-book to satisfy those who desired to retain the use of the psalms in their church services. On p. 126, he says that church music is much neglected in Holland, and, as an exception, refers to the sweet music of the Herrnhuters at Zeist. About the music in the Reformed Dutch Church, he says, "A fine effect is produced in the churches at Albany, New York, and Brunswick, by the aolus-harp, or seraphine, with which the organ is provided." He refers to the rising, swelling, and receding tones of choirs, and of organs far superior to the famous organ at Harlem, and concludes as follows. "Whoever has heard the lovely swelling and receding tones of the American church organ, and the overwhelming power of the choir music, will admit that sacred music is a real part of the worship, too much neglected in Holland."

Prof. Buddingh's work on the Reformed Church in the East contains about 300 pages, and presents the church in all her activities, schools, missions, doctrines, discipline, etc. The work was well received in the East, as a faithful and chaste representation by a conservative educator and scholar of the orthodox part of the old Mother Church, and may not inappropriately be called a photograph of the Reformed Church of seventy years ago. Prof. Buddingh was especially interested in school and home life, and devotes much space to the thorough education in the Scripture of the young folks among the Knickerbock-

ers, a fact which makes his testimony valuable in the study of the Reformed Church, and particularly so with reference to the above-mentioned controversy on school matters.

Prof. Buddingh devotes a whole volume to educational matters, and another to the history and literature of America. One chapter, he says, he wrote while sitting in the study of Prof. Van Vranken at New Brunswick. Buddingh several times refers to the Hollanders of the West, and mentions the Sheboygan Nieuwsbode, then the only Dutch newspaper in America. He frequently refers to the literary activities of Paulding, Hoffman, Duyckinck, Congressman Verplanck, and other Knickerbockers. Verplanck especially did a great deal to remove the varnish from the boasted civilization of New England, and to restore the settlers of New Netherlands to their rightful position in history as against the witch-burners and self-constituted general superintendents of morality and orthodoxy who inhabited Massachusetts two centuries ago.

To repeat, Prof. Buddingh's reference to the worship and religious education in the families and schools of the eastern Reformed people, are exceedingly important in their bearing on the relations between those people and the Holland settlers in the West.

XXIV. THE REFORMED CHURCH AHEAD OF THE HOLLANDERS OF THE WEST

AN AMUSING feature of the church life among the Western Hollanders is the constant strife since 1847, and particularly so in the seceded part since 1857, about questions that had been agitated and settled long ago in the Eastern Church. The immigrants could not understand that the situation of the Eastern Reformed Church had for a hundred years been a trying one, owing to the geographical situation of that Church in the heart of the America of those days, and that numerous questions pressed for solution at almost every session of the Synods. The relation of that Eastern Church with all sorts of people from western Europe even brought up repeatedly the matter of baptism by Catholic priests, while the encroachment by churches of other Protestant denominations, with different usages and customs, often caused the Reformed Dutch Church to modify her position, as e. g., on the use of hymns and the introduction of Sunday Schools. That the Eastern Church had a history shaped by the necessities of Zion, and that such necessities could have existed years ago in the older parts of the Reformed Church in New York and New Jersey, was beyond the comprehension of some of the Michigan Hollanders. The use of hymns, and the Sunday School displacing catechetical instruction, were to those Hollanders evidence of deliberate weakness and indifference, instead of being, as they actually were, the results of the efforts of the Eastern brethren to conserve the best interests of their churches

by conforming to the reasonable demands of the times as manifested around them. This necessity, which was upon the Eastern Church, has long since overtaken the Western Churches, and people in the Seceded Church, who are beginning to get a history of their own, are also beginning to act just like the Reformed Dutch Church in the East did eighty or more years ago.

The matters of hymns, instrumental music in churches, and the like, were stubbornly fought out in the East, with the result that, in self-defense, the Reformed Church conformed with the usages of the others in matters indifferent, just as the Synod of Dort, and preceding synods, had intended they should do, when the interest of the churches demanded it.

The Reformed Dutch Church has been accused of throwing down the bars on many questions, for instance, leaving the conditions of baptism to the judgment of local pastors or consistories. But a reference to the records of that Church shows that she was willing to, and always did, return from human regulations and restrictions to the rule of the Scriptures. Innumerable disputes arose about baptism, and some people objected to man-made conditions, to "tests not commanded in the Word of God"; hence in 1816, the following pronouncement by General Synod: "The right or privilege of infant baptism doth not rest upon what is called full communion, nor is the partaking of the Lord's Supper, by one or both of the parents, an indispensable test for admitting infants to be baptized in the Reformed Dutch Church. In avoiding an extreme which straightens admission into the Church of Christ, by making a test not commanded in the Word of God, it is necessary to watch against the opposite evil, which makes no distinction between the pure and the vile, and which, by an indiscriminate administration to all who apply, relaxes Christian discipline and prostitutes and sacred ordinance of baptism. The General Synod, therefore, commends and enjoins that when both the parents openly profess such errors or

heresies, or are chargeable with such immoralities and improper conduct as ought, if they were in full communion, to exclude them from the table of the Lord, they shall not, during such apostasy in doctrines and manners, be permitted to present their infants to baptism; but shall be denied that privilege until they profess repentance and show amendment. When one of the parents shall be thus guilty, and the other is a decent and peaceable professor of the religion of Jesus Christ, the infant shall be baptized at the request and upon the right of the professing parent, who alone shall stand and present the child. And lastly, where the minister and one or more of the elders find great ignorance in the parents, and such a want of knowledge in the first principles of our holy religion as to render them unfit to make a public profession of their faith, it shall be their duty to withhold them for a time, notwithstanding their decent moral conduct and profession, and frequently and affectionately instruct them previously to their admission to the ordinance, that thus, if possible, the confession and vows at the baptism of their infants may be made with knowledge, sincerity, and truth." Such action by the Synod certainly shows a disposition to return to the rule of the Scriptures. And such a return is usually erecting barriers against heresies, which it is very unsafe to stigmatize as letting down the bars for heresies.

In 1812, the Synod approved of speaking at funerals a word in season, either at the grave, or in the house, or the church, and to close the solemnity with a prayer and benediction. It took the Seceders of the West fifty years before they changed their opposition, and followed suit in the matter of funeral services.

In 1824, the Reformed Dutch Church, after the experience of the Secession of 1822, and the arbitrary action of certain members in withdrawing in violation of the rules, asserted that "It is an established principle of church government, that the relation subsisting between a church and its members can be dissolved only by death or dismission, or an act of dis-

cipline. Withdrawing is, therefore, out of the question." The Seceders of 1822 called this popery, which took away the liberties of Christians. But it may be doubted whether the General Synod ever spoke Calvinistic truth stronger than in their action above given. There is no liberty given in the New Testament to disturb the harmony in a Christian Church, by staying in it and fighting for non-essentials, or to secede from such Church and to try to steal its property, usurp its place, and claim to be the identical church seceded from. Of course, if an alleged church is corrupt in fundamentals, it ceases to be a church, and withdrawal from such organization is a duty. But to apply such accusation, at that time or any time since, to the Reformed Church is nonsense; and if a Church is not corrupt, or a false Church, the relation between her and her members is dissolved only by death, dismission, or act of discipline. If a church is a true church, then any other way of severing the members is rebellion of the worst kind. The obligations assumed by ministers, officers, and members are laid down in the Church Constitution, and in each case that Constitution provides, how either or all of these may be dismissed in an orderly manner, without undue disturbance of the order of the church.

Dr. Wm. J. R. Taylor, in a sermon before the General Synod in 1883, on "Christian Liberty," said, "No Church can exist as a Church without a proper system of government and laws and belief. Yet these should be held in perfect subjection to the higher law of "the glorious liberty of the children of God." What then? If a church or denomination is wrong, its members have the liberty of trying to right it. If they cannot change it, they have the liberty of leaving it, and even of establishing a new denomination, as the Reformed Episcopalians have done. But no man has a right to stay in a church or communion to fight his own battles, and to make a schism and rend the body of Christ by his obstinacy and rebellion." Dr. Taylor also said that a minister might leave, but, "as a man

under vows, he has no right to violate these within the body of which he is a member, for the sake of proclaiming another gospel." Dr. Taylor, relative to the claim that the Church binds men by "obligations which abridge his liberty of thought and speech," says, "such independence puts the individual above the Church, takes away her powers of self-defense, contradicts the fundamental principles by which a church protects herself, and nullifies the teachings of Christ and His apostles relative to doctrinal purity, the peace and unity of the fold of the Good Shepherd. It gives more liberty to the wolf than to the shepherd, and takes away all protection from the sheep and the lambs. Self-preservation is the law of liberty in the Church as well as in nature and in nations; for liberty cannot exist with lawlessness."

The rule that membership in a Reformed Church can be severed only by death, discipline, or dissension, is absolutely correct. Everybody is free to join, and everybody is free to go, upon compliance with the Rules, in any Reformed Church, but a member may not create a schism or disrupt a church; and secession so-called is available as a remedy only when a Church has ceased to be a part of the body of Christ.

Another line of criticism is followed by those who object to the refusal of the General Synod in 1824 to legislate on abstract questions. The writer has heard Hollanders in the West discuss this question, who evidently did not know what the phrase "abstract question" meant, unless it meant Free Masonry. What the General Synod really meant was this: that while they could lay down general lines of action as to discipline, as they often did relative to dancing in promiscuous gatherings, intemperance, the running of stagecoaches, steamboats, and canal boats on Sunday, and the like, they always left it to the pastors and consistories, in the first instance to determine what consistuted these forms of Sabbath desecration, etc., and who were guilty of same. The General Synod properly left the discipline to the local churches in all its

circumstances and facts, unless the matter came up by way of appeal to a higher body; that is, the General Synod did not lord it over the local churches, but left it to the local church to maintain and enforce discipline on the ground where the offense might be committed.

The Seceders of the West have attacked this refusal to pass on abstract questions, when there was no concrete case of actual offense before the Synod brought up on appeal. But it is interesting to note that the Secession Synod in the Netherlands (now claimed to be the Mother Church of the Western Seceders), took the same stand, in regard to workers in a gas-factory and Zuider Zee fishermen, etc., and insisted on treating matters not as abstract questions, but only as concrete cases coming up by way of appeal. In 1880 this question became prominent in the Free Masonry question in the West, where some wanted the General Synod to condemn Free-Masonry and other oath-bound secret societies off-hand, abstractly; but the General Synod, while saying that the course of safety did not lie in secret societies which undermined the truths of Christianity, refused to introduce new tests of membership not found in the Scriptures into the Reformed Church, but left the matter to the local churches for consideration and action, according to the strict New Testament procedure,—a course of action thoroughly Calvinistic, the very base of the Reformation, and Reformed to the core.

In 1814, the General Synod declared on essential and non-essential customs and usages, and held singing of psalms and hymns approved of and recommended by the General Synod, preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism, and observance of the forms for baptism and the Lord's Supper as contained in the Liturgy, as essential; while the arrangement of the service, number of psalms sung, preaching on Ascension Day, Good Friday and other holydays were counted as non-essential. "Your committee observe that those customs and usages which are deemed essential and

constitutional, are preserved pure and entire by the different Classes; and we observe likewise, that those which are considered non-essential are dispensed with or retained or altered, according to the taste or circumstances of the different ministers and congregations."

The doctrine of the rights and powers of the local church were always recognized to the fullest extent by the Eastern Church, and Rule 30 of Dort was enforced, "A greater Assembly shall take cognizance of those matters alone which could not be determined in a lesser, or that appertain to the churches or congregations in general, which compose such an assembly."

The doctrine "once an elder always an elder," was tacitly admitted, and Dr. Ferris, in his "Characteristics," on p. 23, says about a retiring elder, "Our plan intermits his immediate responsibility and active duties, while he is reserved for a larger council called the Great Consistory, who are convened for special and great questions; he is also chosen, at the pleasure of the proper court, to the Synods."

It is the claim of the Western Seceders that the doctrine of Christian liberties, as understood and applied in the Eastern Church, and in the Classis of Holland, seventy years ago, was not true Calvinism, and that laxity in ecclesiastical rule is invariably the forerunner of laxity in doctrines and morals. But the experience of eighteen centuries has shown that the failure to observe those liberties made the Romish Church a vast ecclesiastical despotism under which religious liberty was lost. Christ and the apostles nowhere insisted on a code of iron-clad rules in the church to bind the consciences of believers. Calvin's Institutes is severe in its condemnation of such rules, and justly so, for the Reformation was nothing but an attempt to get away from the domination of church-made rules. What those Western Seceders in 1857 did was to restore the reign of oppressive rules in the church. The Reformed Church, the fathers at Wesel said, has

maintained against the Romish Church (which makes people believe that salvation is dependent upon obedience to Church Rules), that there is no salvation, no piety, no holiness to be found, nor must be sought, in such rules, while the Western Seceders in 1857 said the Romish Church is right, salvation, piety and holiness are found, and must be sought, in rules of church government, and unless the Reformed Church holds and believes with us, we will secede.

It is no wonder that Van Raalte, Van der Meulen, Van de Luyster and Van Hees saw from the start that the Eastern Reformed Church was far ahead of the Western Hollanders in knowledge of the Calvinistic system, and in the decency and good order of her church life. They knew, as did many of the immigrants of 1846-7, who tarried with the Eastern people for months, that the Eastern Church followed the old Standards of the Reformed Churches of Europe; moreover, it became clearer by further association in the General Synods, that this Eastern Church had varied neither to the right nor to the left from the Reformed spirit as it existed since 1568, and that this Eastern Church had not removed the ancient landmarks of faith and polity during the disturbances which shook the old Church of Holland, together the Dutch people, from one ecclesiastical extreme to the other. Van Raalte saw at once that the novelty and inexperience of the Secession of 1834-40 had no counterpart in the Eastern Reformed Dutch Church, and that no reckless and superficial phariseeism ruled in this Church. There he found the faith of the Fathers, and the Church of the Fatherland, an offshoot of Dort, which had retained, of course, Art. 71 of Dort, which specified that "as Christian discipline is spiritual, and exempts no person from the judgment and punishment of the civil power, so it is requisite that without any reference to civil punishment, ecclesiastical or spiritual censure should be exercised." Van Raalte found that the General Synod had long ago proclaimed that "the Reformed Dutch Church deprecates any union between

Church and State as alike detrimental to the interests of vital piety, and dangerous to that liberty of conscience which is now enjoyed by the citizens of our happy republic. The results of experience in this country abundantly prove that the Church needs no other support than the piety of its members and the grace of Christ." Van Raalte also found that Art. 36 of the Confession, requiring governments to prevent and extirpate all idolatry and false worship, etc., had been, in accordance with American ideas, sufficiently explained in the preface to the Constitution of 1792, and in the 35th Explanatory Article, and that in Explanatory Article 69 of 1792, all distinction between whites and blacks in church communion had been abolished.

The history of the Reformed Dutch Church from 1792 till 1850 is full of efforts to return from human rules to the rule of the Scriptures; but it is evident that the Eastern Church was not nearly as strong against such human rules as were Van Raalte and the colonists, who, as we know, went so far as to rule, in 1848, that ministers could not be bound to preach from the Heidelberg Catechism, because it was commanded only by mere temporal church rules. Van Raalte's people therefore even had their own manner of religious instruction, while the synods of the Eastern Church fought for the Heidelberger very strenuously. The experience Van Raalte's people had in Holland had made them view stern church rules with suspicion and fear. The Eastern Church, closely associated through the sojourn of her students in the schools of old Holland, until 1771, was cut off from all connection with Holland after 1790, and had no experience of the domination of human rules under Napoleon and after 1816, so that the Eastern Church was relatively purer on the question of rules than were Van Raalte and the "Forty-niners," who feared, and than were the Seceders of 1857, who worshiped, Church Rules.

Western Seceder writers think they score a point

REV. A. C. VAN RAALTE, D.D.

against the Eastern Church, because she failed to expand. But most of her children who moved West, went in parties too small to maintain a church of their own. The result of following them into the West was the organization of the Classis of Illinois and of Michigan, about 1840, composed of several small churches, as at Fairview, Ill., and Constantine, Michigan. Mission stations were established, among other places, at Allegan and at Grand Rapids, Mich. Grand Rapids had an organized American Reformed Church as early as 1840. But, in New York and New Jersey, the rather conservative Reformed people were pressed by the more radical Presbyterians and other denominations, and it is safe to say that if that Church had assumed the exclusive attitude of the Seceders of 1822 or of those of 1857, she would have foundered. If the Secession Church of 1857 had been in the East, instead of among a lot of Holland immigrants, constantly augmented by other immigrants, she would not have lasted very long. Even today the Western Seceders depend upon immigration almost exclusively for their growth, and their expansion, under conditions similar to those in the East, and among Americans, has been looked for in vain. The fight made by the Eastern Church against heavy odds was not, and is not, understood in the West, even today. That Church is today fighting the same battles, in a still greater Babylon than a hundred years ago.

It was the claim of the Seceders of 1834 in the Netherlands, that they wanted to return from Rationalism and the Rules of 1816 to the "Fathers of Dort." As a whole, after many years of intestinal strife, these Seceders succeeded fairly well in attaining their object. The Reformed Dutch Church really never left the atmosphere of the fathers of Dort; but while the Dutch Seceders were struggling to return to Dort, they broke into several disorderly factions, and were in the greatest confusion when Van Raalte and Scholte and their people left for America. In the Zwolle-Kampen neighborhood many of those Seceders started what

was called the Reformed Church Under The Cross, the so-called *Kruisgezinden* or *Kruiskerken,* composed of people who declared the other Seceders Remonstrants, and who claimed they were the real Calvinists returning to Dort. They ordained a few of their men as ministers, one of whom was D. J. Van der Werp, who made it his business in American, 1864-76, to propagate the principles of the Kruisgezinden. There were in Holland several other factions with strong independent leanings; and when the migration to America began in 1846-7, the war of the faction was at its height, and the real nature of the Dutch secession had not been able to assert itself.

When Van Raalte and Van der Meulen and the other leaders came in contact with the Eastern Reformed Church, they found that she had been practically free from the disturbances which had desolated ecclesiastical Holland, and had suffered little from independency on the one hand, and rigid adherence to man-made Rules, on the other. They found that in her ranks the questions of Remonstrantism had been raised so little, that Dr. Livingston, Solomon Fraeligh, and the other fathers of the Church had not reprinted the "Rejection of Errors" with the Canons of Dort. They found, also, that the Church had not surrendered to the Labadists of 1822, but had slung Labadism from her arms, as Dr. Kuyper would say, as if it were a poisonous serpent. They found in the Reformed Dutch Church a more accurate knowledge of Reformed doctrine and practice than could at that time be found in Holland except in books; and, no wonder, for there never was a time in that Church, when her leaders appealed more strongly to Calvin's Institutes, to Voetius, and to Witsius. Van Raalte found, from the Digest of 1848, that, for fifty years or more, that Reformed Dutch Zion had applied the principle that no piety, holiness, or salvation can be found, nor must be sought, in Church Rules, and had thus stood squarely on the Magna Charta of the Synod of Wesel, and on Calvin's Institutes. For such reasons, Van Raalte and

the fathers of 1849 felt themselves one with the Eastern Church,—on principles with which they had tried in vain to unite the disorganized secession in the old country, on principles rejected by these Kruiskerken and the other independent factions in the Netherlands, who instead of returning to the spirit of Dort, returned to the letter of Dort, against the evident intent of Dort.

Later on, in Michigan, after the union with the Eastern Church, and while the factions in old Holland united in 1854, 1869 and 1892, the old stumbling blocks of Holland were set up,—opposition to hymns, to funeral services, to dead bodies in church during a funeral, to flowers on a casket, to church organs, to fire insurance, to life insurance, to lightning rods, to flowers on bonnets, to white dresses, to Sunday Schools, to the English language, to the suffocating gas of Methodism, to foreign missions, to Christmas trees, to vaccination, and to picnics. And in addition, the "unconditional acceptance" of Church Rules over 200 years old,—while the Martyr Church had the rashness to make six or seven different sets of rules during forty years, —were projected as the marks of the True Church as against the Reformed Dutch Church and the Classis of Holland. It is evident that the Secession Church of the Netherlands is not the Mother of the Secession Churches in America. That distinction may be claimed by the Kruiskerken which went out of existence in 1869. The Seceders in Michigan, in 1857, claimed they wanted to return to Dort, but they got no farther than the Kruiskerken of 1837, and stuck there for years. Most of the points advanced by these Seceders of 1857, have been quite well yielded by them since, and even the doctrine of predestination is given its proper place by Rev. Bosma, a writer of that Church, without magnifying it out of due propostion. And it is astonishing, therefore, that this secession church in the West, based, as it really is, on the few Kruiskerken in old Holland, claims it is the representative of true Dutch Calvinism, because Van Raalte and the others, by

joining the East in 1850, broke away from Calvinism. "Alas, alas," says one of these Secession writers, "they joined an American Church, so long separated from the influence of the Mother Country." Another Seceder deplored the fact that now only "our little church" has to do battle for true Calvinism. The distance between Satan and a Hollander or a Scotchman, when the latter has turned Pharisee, is not so appreciable as it ought to be. It was the good fortune of the Calvinists of the Eastern Reformed Dutch Church, and of Princeton, that from 1790-1850, they were not exposed to the religious influence of either the State Church or the Dutch Seceders, or to that of western Europe, and, consequently, were able the better to preserve the Calvinism of Dort. The Seceders of 1857, in Michigan, whatever they thought, were not real Calvinists, as Van Raalte and his adherents were. Calvinism was really submerged and lost by the Seceders of 1857, as the six points of Graafschap's secession, not one of which was based on doctrinal grounds, clearly show.

If anything, Van Raalte and the Classis of Holland were a little ahead even of the Eastern Church in their views of the liberties with regard to Church Rules, and the break of 1857 was therefore the break among the Western Hollanders themselves, and not so much with the East. Furthermore, the stories that Van Raalte deplored the union with the East and the resulting break in the West, are secession pipe-dreams. Van Raalte did deplore the division of the Western churches, but he always insisted that in her conception of Calvinistic doctrines, Reformed polity, and the spirit of Christianity, the Eastern Church was years ahead of the Western Hollanders. Van Raalte was right. The Hollanders were too biased by the secession in Holland to see clearly, and that whole Secession Church of the West has only recently begun to show signs of a return to Calvinistic conceptions of the Christian Church. The arrival of Rev. D. J. Van der Werp, one of the original members of the Kruiskerken,

in America in 1864, and several like him, made the Secession Church, by about 1870, worse than in 1857; and with such timber in the colony there would have been a split, East or no East, sooner or later.

Elder Van Driele of Grand Rapids, in 1882, said substantially that the Eastern Reformed Church had done the West nothing but good; she helped us in our necessities, and never in one particular oppressed us with a yoke of non-essentials. On the other hand, we failed to retire elders every two years, we sang psalms and no hymns, we quarreled about extirpating heresies, and otherwise behaved in a disorderly manner. Nevertheless, the Eastern Church did not compel us by a snare of Rules, but showered us with gifts of money, and, above all, with a propaganda for foreign missions which changed the character of the Western Reformed Church into a great factor in foreign missions.

There has been a tendency in the Western Secession Church to work on the prejudices of the Dutch as against the "English" Church in the East. Van Driele mentions the fact that in 1882, some people in the Fourth Church of Grand Rapids talked about getting rid of "those English" in the East. This prejudice was used rather skillfully by the Western Seceders in manipulating the later immigration from the Netherlands, as will appear later. But in spite of all that happened in the West, during the last sixty years, the distinctive features of Calvinism have been preserved better at New Brunswick and Princeton than by the Seceders in the West. Even in regard to the matter of Church Confessions, the East has always clearly understood, as Dr. Taylor expressed it, "that creeds are the outgrowth of beliefs, interpretations, and experiences of those who have made them according to their knowledge, belief, and the use of the materials which they found in the Word of God. The principles of Protestantism, the practice of the Reformers and the earlier creed builders, who made the Bible their Rule of Faith, compel us to recognize the same right and privilege of any church or denomina-

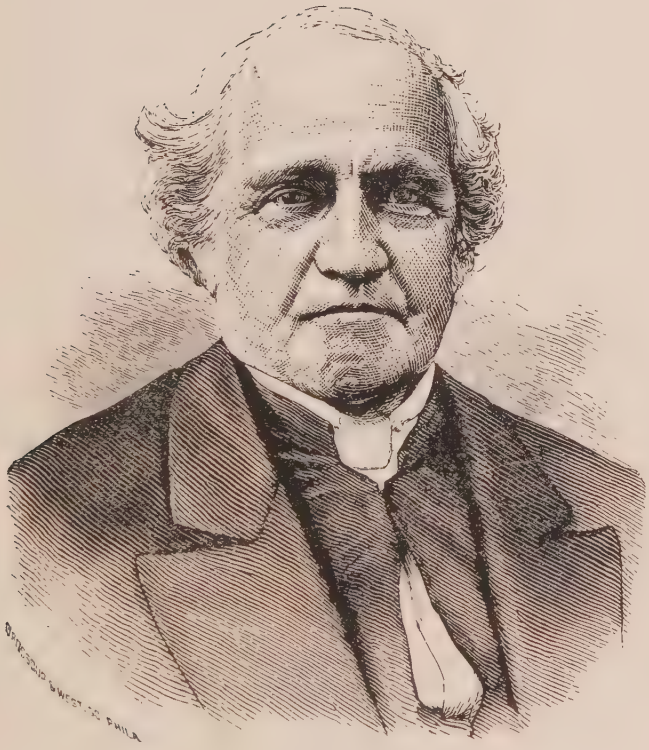
tion, or alliance of churches, to frame its own confessional symbols, which was exercised by their predecessors. Neither the Christian Fathers, nor the Reformers, nor the men of Augsberg, Heidelberg, Dort and Westminster had any prescriptive divine right for making confessions of faith for all Christendom which does not belong to Christian men and churches of later ages." Dort then, neither in Creed nor in Rules, had necessarily spoken the first or the last word.

It is very evident that Van Raalte saw in the fact that the Eastern people were ahead of the Dutch immigrants in their ecclesiastical experience and life a half a century or more, that he had no right to refuse obedience to the law of Christ to be one with that vigorous off-shoot of Dort. The East sang hymns and psalms in English, recognized other Christian churches, and did other things beyond the comprehension of the denizens of country crossroad towns in Holland and the woods of Michigan; but she stood on the platform of Bogerman and Dort, and had zeal for God with knowledge. There is nothing in the life and history of the Reformed Dutch Church of the East in the last century that can give an excuse for people of Reformed faith anywhere for refusing the fullest co-operation with her; and so far from the union of the Western Hollanders with that Church in 1850 being a mistake, Van Raalte and his people would have exposed themselves to everlasting disgrace if they had *not* joined. According to Reformed doctrine and practice, those who broke that union in 1857 were, in their conception of the whole system of Reformed Church government, far off the good old way, and were in that respect nothing short of heretics. It is not Church Rules, it is not the preaching from the Catechism every Sunday while throwing the principles of that Catechism to the dogs, that constitutes a Calvinistic Reformed Church. It is not Reformed doctrine to secede from all Protestant denominations, as was done in Michigan in 1857, on "six points," in all of which Reformed doctrine says there

is no piety nor holiness nor salvation, neither may they be sought therein. It was this un-Reformed insistence by the Seceders on points of subordinate importance like feast-days, church music, and the like, that moved Rev. H. P. Scholte of Pella, Iowa, in his last days, to characterize the Secession Church in the West as "a communion which deceives itself and others with the name of True Reformed Church, while it is full of suffocating gas which destroys all growth in grace," and as "the wickedest ward in the modern Babylon." Rev. Scholte had, since 1840, been the leader of professional secessionists who believed that secession was the only means of reforming churches; he never joined the Reformed Church in America, but he was opposed to seceding on points of church government which did not touch fundamental principles, as did the Seceders of 1857, and hence the strong statement quoted above. Opposed as Scholte was to Church Rules, he hated a church based on rules alone, as the Secession Church in the West appeared to be.

Since instances of the strictness of the Reformed Dutch Church of eighty years ago are numerous in the columns of The Intelligencer, let it suffice to call attention to the criticism of that paper on Zachary Taylor, who as president-elect, while on his way to Washington, traveled on Sunday. The Intelligencer was exceedingly rough in its strictures on him, and did not hesitate to conclude with—"Polk never did this." In spite of the Whig leanings of that paper, the editors did not spare even Taylor when Sabbath observance was at stake.

A fair sample of the Holland language used by the Eastern Reformed people until a half century ago is found in Rev. Murdock's "Dutch Dominie of the Catskills," published in 1862. The hero of the book is one of Murdock's predecessors in the Catskill Reformed Church, Rev. Schunneman, who was the great patriot of that region during the Revolutionary War, and especially during the Brant raid of 1780. The Dutch used in this volume is surely the Staten Bijbel



REV. C. VANDER MEULEN

Dutch. As is the case in South Africa today, the remarkable vitality and tenacity of the Dutch language in New York and New Jersey was based on the fact that it was so long the ecclesiastical and spiritual language of the people. If the western people do half as well in retaining familiarity with the Holland tongue as the East did, they will do well. Dr. Murdock, be it said in passing, expresses what has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, when he wrote, "The whole colony of New York was in the hands of these Dominies [during the Revolutionary War], and it is praise enough to their memories that that portion of the new states came out of that great struggle as honorably as Massachusetts, whose speeches ring like the bell of Old South, in Boston, 'Praise be to me! Praise be to me!'"—Dutch Dominie of the Catskills, p. 288.

There have been times in the history of the Reformed Dutch Church when there were too many vacant churches, and when religious instruction was neglected, as at some places during 1700-1780; but it may be doubted whether there ever was such neglect as in the Netherlands from 1795-1830. The American Church made remarkable progress after the Revolution, while the failure to harmonize among the Seceders in Holland, after 1835, is directly traceable to the terrible neglect of proper instruction. That the efforts for extension in the Western fields of the American Reformed Church were not so successful as those of other churches, is attributed to the fact that those of her members who moved west were too few in number at each place, as already stated above. The minutes of the True Reformed Dutch, or Secession, Church of the East, for the year 1850, speak of her losses by emigration, and of intentions to follow the emigrants; but so difficult was the problem, that the latter Church failed in this entirely. There is, therefore, no force in the slurs and criticisms indulged in by the Western Seceders on this score.

Today it is also being lost sight of that, long before Van Raalte and Scholte landed in America, the mis-

sionary spirit was the dominant passion of the Reformed Dutch Church in the East. It is true that Van Raalte and Van der Meulen both were strongly imbued with this spirit, but their people were not. Before 1847 the reports from Borneo and Amoy and India stirred the Eastern Church into a fever heat, and the Intelligencer was eloquent with missionary fervor. Van Raalte and the other leaders caught the spirit from the East, and Van Vleck and Phelps fanned the flames still further. And, when the keel of that mission ship was laid on the shores of Black Lake in 1864, the spirit of John Van Vleck was regnant, while Philip Phelps was the main originator of the enterprise. The whole atmosphere was that of the East. John V. N. Talmage, from Amoy, was present at the laying of that keel; and, all the other missionaries of the Church visited the churches in the West regularly. Dr. Van Raalte, from 1847 on, distributed thousands of the leaflets and missionary pamphlets furnished by the East, and the missionary zeal of the New York and Jersey churches ran over and into the Colonial Churches.

And, further, were Abel T. Stewart, Van Vleck, Phelps and Chrispell—all eastern men—not strictly Reformed? Did not Dr. Chrispell's preaching the old doctrines so strongly lead to a break in Hope Church, and to the consequent establishment of the Methodist Church at Holland, Mich.? Weaknesses there were in the Eastern Church, and the influences from without were exceedingly inimical to Calvinistic doctrine; but most of the complaints heard in the West were based on differences between the American and Dutch ways of worship, differences of no real importance. The doctrinal differences resolve themselves into mere divergence of opinion as to emphasizing the doctrines of election or that of human responsibility. If the East deviated from the old landmarks in one direction, the Western Hollander who seceded deviated as much in the other direction, while in the domain of real Re-

formed polity, those Western Seceders were absolutely groping in the dark.

Meanwhile, the Eastern Reformed churches fought a great fight for existence in the face of the greatest foreign incursion ever experienced in America. Hordes of Italians and other foreigners, frugal and industrious races, were and are supplanting the old stock in the Hudson region and in New Jersey, and that the Reformed strongholds there were not all overturned is miraculous. And still the fight continues. And let us not deceive ourselves. The same fight is beginning to face the Western churches, where in the cities the same elements are jostling and crowding around.

This trend of affairs was visible in the East from the beginning, and the leaders of the immigration, such as Van Raalte and Scholte, saw it. Is it so profitable then to divide and rule for a while, as secessionists seem to desire, to be finally submerged on account of the lack of union among people of the Reformed persuasion? Years ago,—a hundred years or so,—the spires of Reformed Churches dominated the landscape around New York City. The most conspicuous mark on the Jersey shore, visible from Battery Place, were the white walls and steeple of Bergen Church. In Brooklyn, and farther back on Long Island, were the Flatbush, Jamaica, and other Reformed churches; to the north on both sides of the Hudson and Mohawk rose the steeples of Reformed churches in almost every village and city. From the Catskills could be seen the spires of Reformed churches at Schenectady, Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie, Fonda, Schoharie and Amsterdam. The Wallkill and Hackensack regions were dotted with Reformed churches, Staten Island had several, and the Garden of the Dutch Church was in Somerset and Middlesex Counties, New Jersey. There stood those Reformed forts, within sight of Old Nassau Hall at Princeton, and stretching to the northeast, heavily reinforced at the center by the New York, Brooklyn, and the Jersey Bergen County churches,

thence along the Hudson and Mohawk far to the north and west to the lake region of western New York. There were these Reformed congregations like a large semi-circular breastwork, protecting the West from the hordes of rationalism. And well did they maintain the heavy cannonade of a hundred years ago. The General Synod stood firm against all extremes, and like "the old Continentals, in their ragged regimentals, yielding not." And it is to the credit of the Reformed Dutch Church that she had the grit and determination to destroy the Antinomian heresies of Fraeligh and others in her own ranks, and so curbed the rank spirit of sectarianism. That same semi-circular breastwork exists today. Some of those churches have disappeared, while others arose in a maze of churches of other denominations; and the situation confronting the Eastern Reformed Church since 1800 should not be forgotten by critics.

For two centuries the Eastern Church had fought to retain the old language of Holland. In 1750 she split in two on the question of Holland-worship. In the articles of Union of 1771 she said, "To preserve, in the best possible manner, the bond of union with our highly esteemed mother church (which we greatly desire), there shall, first, be sent every year a complete copy of all acts of our General Assembly, signed by the Praesis and Scriba for the time being, to the Classis of Amsterdam, as duly named by the Synod of North Holland for that purpose,"—Article XXII. After the independence of the Church in 1792, and after the downfall of Napoleon and Holland's restoration, she sought to restore the close connection with the old Mother Country, but found her ecclesiastical mother in great trouble. She deplored the declension of the old church in 1830, and in 1838, years before she could know of the immigration of 1847, conducted a great debate in her General Synod about protesting the acts of Holland against the Seceders—a matter on which action was deferred on account of the dangerous sit-

uation of her own missionaries in Dutch Borneo. The records of the Reformed Dutch Church of eighty years ago are replete with expressions of concern about the deplorable condition of the mother church; and think of that little American Dutch Church sending in 1836, at great expense, five or more missionaries, to the colonies of Holland, and seriously considering the matter of sending some of her own Dutch-speaking ministers to old Holland as missionaries; and finally breaking off all connection with the Mother Church and taking sides with the Seceders cast out by her, and forming Emigration Aid Associations months before Van Raalte and Scholte landed on American soil. It was love for the old doctrines that actuated the Eastern people to take the side of the Holland emigrants, and because they had suffered for that cause, did the General Synod speak so hightly of the Holland emigrants of 1847.

But what is strange is that after the Holland immigrants had been located in Michigan and the West less than ten years, the extremists among them took up the arguments of Fraeligh, and mixed them with certain extreme views from Holland, and by 1857 had discovered that the orthodoxy of one's faith should be seen through the holiness, not of doctrine and life, but of Church Rules as *written* in 1619; and this they did regardless of the fact that the Seceders in the Netherlands had adopted, in 1840, the whole body of Church Rules, enacted from 1568 to 1619 and later, and they did this also without a knowledge of the disgraceful failure which overcame the Secession of 1822 in 1828-29. The Western Seceders of 1857 were an advance on the wild secession extremists of Holland and Fraeligh alike, for they seceded on "six points," as formulated by the Graafschap, Mich., church, in April, 1857, every one of which was reducible to a mere question of Church Orders or Rules, without involving directly a single doctrinal point. And, they seceded "from all other Protestant denominations," and from the Reformed Dutch Church because the latter, to a certain

extent, recognized and associated with such other denominations. The Seceders of 1857 really broke away on points, almost every one of which was subsequently by their own acts and conduct repudiated, so that their accusations have been turned into marks of honor in the Reformed Dutch Church, as will appear later. And while the Seceders in the woods of Michigan were, in 1857, seceding because the Reformed Dutch Church co-operated in foreign missions with two other denominations, and was therefore a false church, the latter church established her own foreign missionary department in the great synod of 1857, at Ithaca, N. Y.,—a synod of which Dr. Isaac Ferris wrote as follows: "In 1857 the Synod met at Ithaca, and a most remarkable synod it was. According to the testimony of all who were present, the Spirit of God unusually manifested His gracious presence. A venerable minister on his return remarked, 'It was like heaven upon earth.' That synod, under the extraordinary sense of the Divine presence and unction, judged the time had arrived for the Church to take the responsibility of supporting its foreign missionary work upon itself." Van Raalte was present when the Synod concluded to take sole charge of her own missions, and The Intelligencer said he spoke long and eloquently to the Synod. His topic seems to have been, however, the pressing need of a suitable harbor for the "Colony," and the growing importance of the educational concerns of the Hollanders in the West.

In 1879, a certain Rev. R. T. Kuiper came from the Netherlands to the Seceder Church at Graafschap, Mich., and wrote two pamphlets, primarily for circulation in the Old Country. Without betraying the least vestige of acquaintance with the history of the Reformed Dutch Church and her relations to and efforts for the old Church of Holland, and later for the Seceder immigrants, this writer accuses the Reformed Church of "not bothering herself" about the old Mother Church. History shows Rev. Kuiper did not know what he was talking about, and his *Een Tijd-*

woord and *Stem Uit Amerika,* still even quoted as authorities, are devoid of historical merit; they are samples of the spirit of the Michigan Seceders, who did not "bother about" the old Mother Church, but even seceded from, and excommunicated, the American representative and offshoot of the churches of Dort, which preserved the traditions and doctrines and polity of Dort better than those Seceders themselves did. In fact, the way those Seceders of the West, with their appeals to Reformed doctrine, their insistence on the usages and customs of old Holland, and their refusal to recognize the fact that they lived in America, treated the brethren of the East, is an enigma. With loud acclaim of Holland and her marvelous history, civil and ecclesiastical, those Seceders cursed the Eastern churches as false churches, instead of giving them praise for the tenacity with which they had maintained the Dutch language, for their vast collection of theological literature of the era of Dort, and for preserving the essence of the Calvinistic system of doctrine, in the midst of the greatest obstacles. The Reformed Dutch Church, with her schools in deadly competition with larger schools, her papers in competition with larger papers, and her churches in their own homes stormed by other and larger denominations, with hordes of foreigners crowding on all sides of her, while she faithfully retained the distinctive features of the Reformation and of Calvinistic truth, with a love for the truly heroic of old Holland and her Martyr Church,—really, this Reformed Dutch Church deserved the praise given her by Van Raalte and Van der Meulen, when in the Classes of 1850-57, they told the Hollanders that "those Eastern Churches make us ashamed of ourselves by their good example and Christian charity."

Some of the Holland immigrants of 1847, and later, came from the excitement and confusion of the Secession in Holland, and in their ignorance of the real nature of the Christian Church, they thought the Lord

spoke through them only. They spoke of reforming the church in 1857, and if their words had been the equivalent of deeds, all would have been well; but they did not understand that the Reformed Dutch Church had existed in America for two centuries and more, and had not assumed the exact attitude which the Seceders in the Netherlands had been obliged to take against the State Church. Dr. Van Raalte and the other leaders understood thoroughly that the unity of the Christian Church is not destroyed by difference of geography, language, or government, and that it was necessary to adopt American ways here to a large extent. In the last analysis, the break among the Western Hollanders in 1857, was a revolt against the Americanization favored by Van Raalte and Van der Meulen, in church life and also in every day concerns. The one-sided stories of heterodoxy in the East spread by Fraeligh's church, coupled with a lack of knowledge of the frightful lapse of those Eastern Antinomians, had some effect, but the main arguments in the West, from 1852 till 1856, were against the attitude assumed by the Classis of Holland on matters of Festival-days, Communion, Church Rules, and the like. This attitude was substantially that of the Eastern Church. And when, in 1856, the Fraeligh arguments of 1822-24 reached the Colony, there was a little shift, which in later years was magnified into the cause of secession, namely Van Raalte's and the Classis of Holland's defense of, and refusal to break with, the Church of Wyckoff, De Witt, Bethune and Livingston. Van Raalte, Van der Meulen, Bolks and Ypma and their followers believed, seventy years ago (what is now admitted by the Secession Church of the West, although she owes her origin to the opposite idea) that it was error and heterodoxy to secede "from the Dutch Reformed Church and all other Protestant denominations," as was done in 1857. Van Raalte and the other leaders believed, in 1850, that the Reformed Dutch Church spoke aright, when she declared in the introduction to her constitution in 1792, "The Church is a

Society wholly distinct in its principles, laws and end, from any which men have ever instituted for civil purposes. It consists of all, in every age and place, who are chosen, effectually called, and united by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. The different dispensations, either before or since the coming of the Messiah, have made no essential change in the benefits of the everlasting Covenant; nor do the various denominations or descriptions of particular churches, under which, from many unavoidable circumstances of language, nation, or other causes of distinction, believers are classed, effect any schism in the body, or destroy the communion of saints."

The above doctrine is undeniably New Testament logic, well understood by Van Raalte and the vast majority of the colonists of 1847; for in 1849 they already talked about "God's children of every denomination are dear to us." They also understood that the only Forms of Concord which unified Reformed people were the Articles of Faith, the Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, and that Church communion or connection is based thereon subordinate to the Scriptures only. They also knew, what a few among them in 1857 and even earlier did not seem to know, that to make the sacred duty of joining or seceding from a church dependent upon the old-fashioned high pulpit, the voorlezer, the precentor, exclusive use of psalms, preaching from the catechism, feast-days, differences due to the habits, customs, and usages of old Holland, and Church Rules, is not Reformed, but Secession doctrine. And hence, on the strength of the fact that the Netherlands Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and Compendium, and the Canons of Dort, were the Forms of Concord in the old churches of Holland and of the Reformed Dutch Church of the East, they said also, in 1849, that "since our feet first pressed the soil of the New World, we have never considered ourselves other than a part of the Dutch Reformed Church."

In 1850, the Classis of Holland applied for permission to send her delegates to the assemblies of the

Reformed Dutch Church as the expression of her unity with that church, and the General Synod simply declared that unity which had already existed by virtue of the Forms of Concord.

The writer well remembers that his father, who was editor of De Hollander during the dark days of the Civil War, used to tell of Dr. Van Raalte's visits to his house, when they expected further news of some battle or other important event. In 1865, after they heard of Lincoln's assassination, Van Raalte called in the evening, and told once more the story of his reception by the Reformed brethren in New York, and of his many trips out East, and of how delighted he was when De Witt and Wyckoff unfolded to him the history of the Reformed Dutch Church in America the first time in 1846, even the struggle against Labadists of 1822. Van Raalte of course classed this movement of 1822 as something like the methods of some of the extreme Seceders in Holland. However, he warmed up on the subject in a two hours' talk about the Eastern Church, and her rigid old elders and orthodox ways. He had found the Dutch language understood by the Eastern Church, and even her cemeteries and churches suggested the Holland Church of the times of Dort. Van Raalte's sentiments of that evening have been rather well expressed in the quotation Dr. Messler employs on p. 139 of his "Forty years at Raritan":

"Church of my sires, my love to thee,
Was nurtured in my infancy;
And now maturer thoughts approve
The object of that early love.
Linked to my soul with hooks of steel,
By all I say, and do, and feel;
By records that refresh my eye,
In the rich page of memory;
By blessings at thine altars given,

By scenes which lift the soul to heaven;
By monuments that humbly rise,
Memorials of the good and wise;
By graves forever sad and dear,
Still reeking with my constant tears;
Where those in honored slumber lie,
Whose deaths have taught me how to die.
And shall I not with all my powers,
Watch round thy venerable towers?
And can I bid the pilgrim flee
To holier refuge than to thee?
Church of my sires, my heart's best home!
From thee I cannot, will not roam!"

Hardly a word has been said in this series of papers about the Reformed Dutch Church since 1857, for the reason that the character of that Church as it existed before 1857 only is involved in the controversy with the men of 1857 in the West. The Church of Van Buren, the Roosevelts, Sherman and Hobart, and what is of deeper significance, the Church of Theodore Frelinghuysen, Hasbrouck, Campbell, Livingston, Romeyn, Bethune, the Talmages of Bound Brook,—T. De Witt, John and the rest of them,—of Van Harlingen, Thos. De Witt, Wyckoff, Berg, Ferris, Verbeck, and Woodbridge, has a record which speaks for itself. We know the flaws and blemishes of the Colonial period, but these were no worse than those which checkered the career of the Church in Holland, during the same time, or than those which marked the religious life of the Hollanders the first forty years or more of their sojourn in America. Able hands have written the history of the Reformed Church, since 1857, high on the walls of fame, both at home in the Hudson, Mohawk, and Raritan regions, and also in glowing letters on the mission battlefields of the orient.

What has been written in these papers is sufficient to show that the Reformed Dutch Church of 1850 was the historical continuation of the real old Reformed Church of the era of Dort, comparatively unsullied by the waves of European or New England rationalism, of Fraeligh's Antinomian heresies, and of the unbalanced doctrines and extravagances of the Dutch Secession of eighty years ago—a Church, from which the secession of the Western Hollanders in 1857 proved to be an illegal, unscriptural, and un-Reformed schism, based, not indeed entirely on wrong intentions, but on ignorance of the distinctive features of Reformed Churches.

THE MASTER'S COLLEGE
3 3540 00027 2702